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JANUARY, 1948

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Esquire

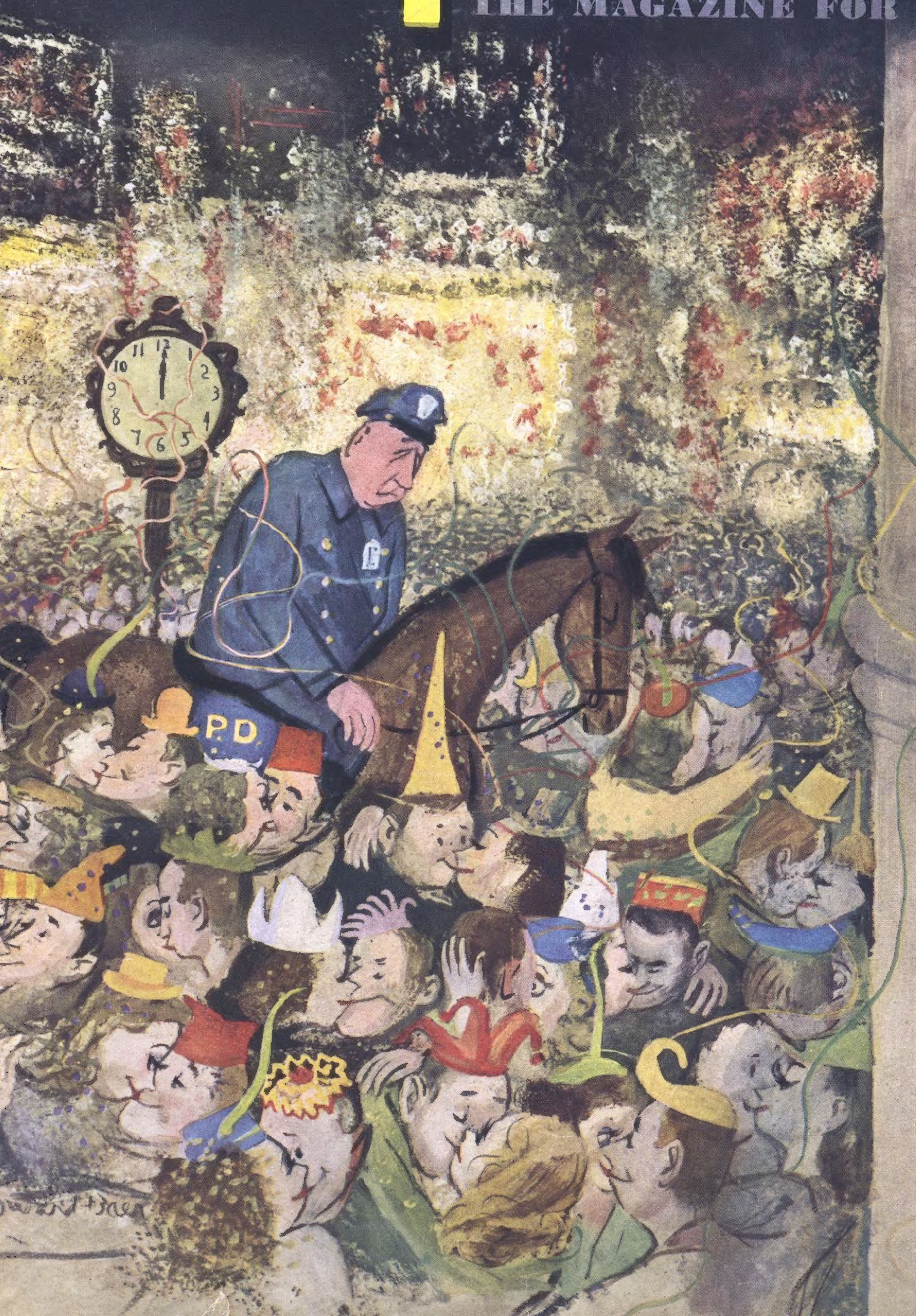
THE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

35

FULL LENGTH NOVEL
PAGE 99

"Armchair in Hell"

by
Henry
Kane



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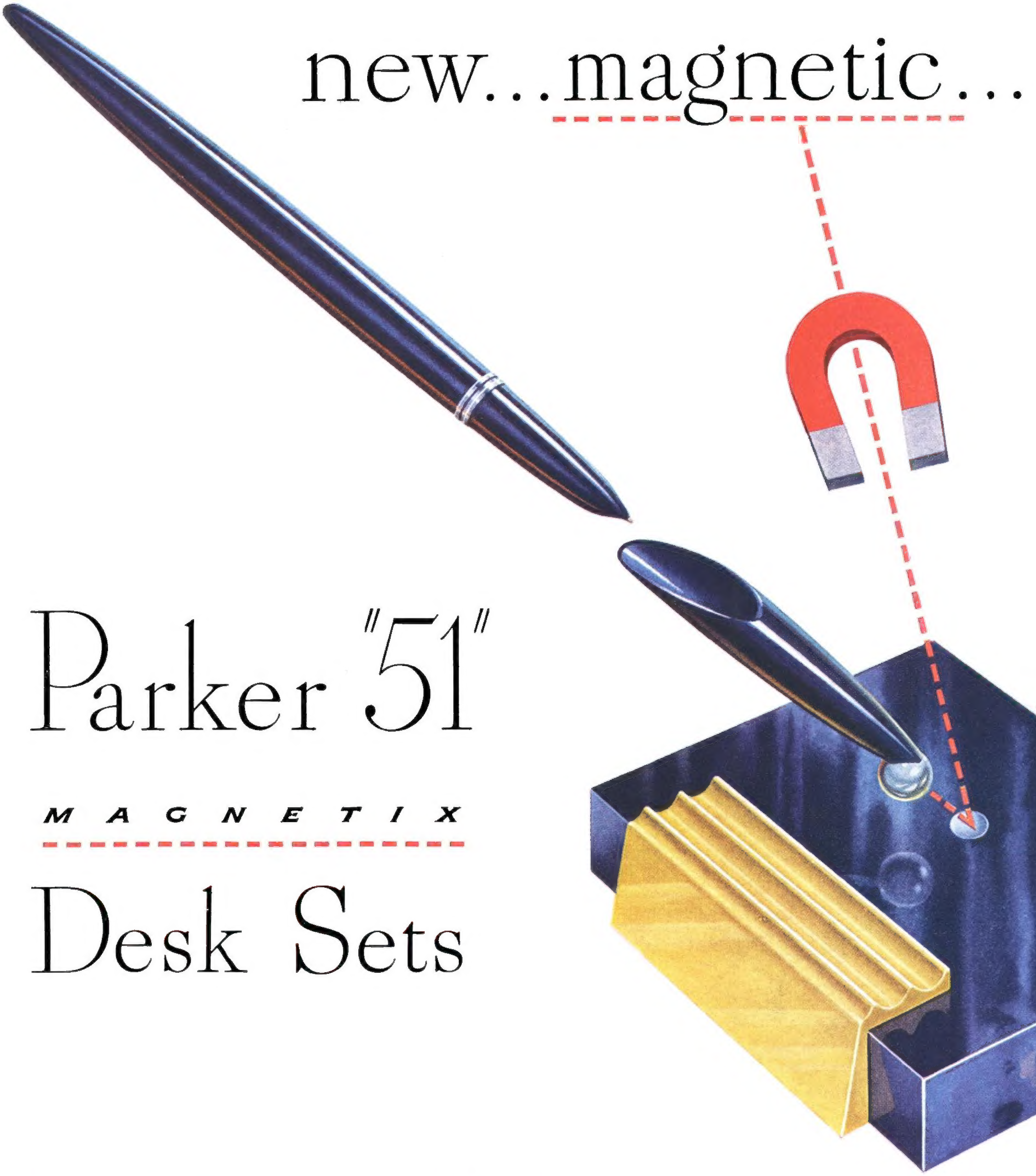
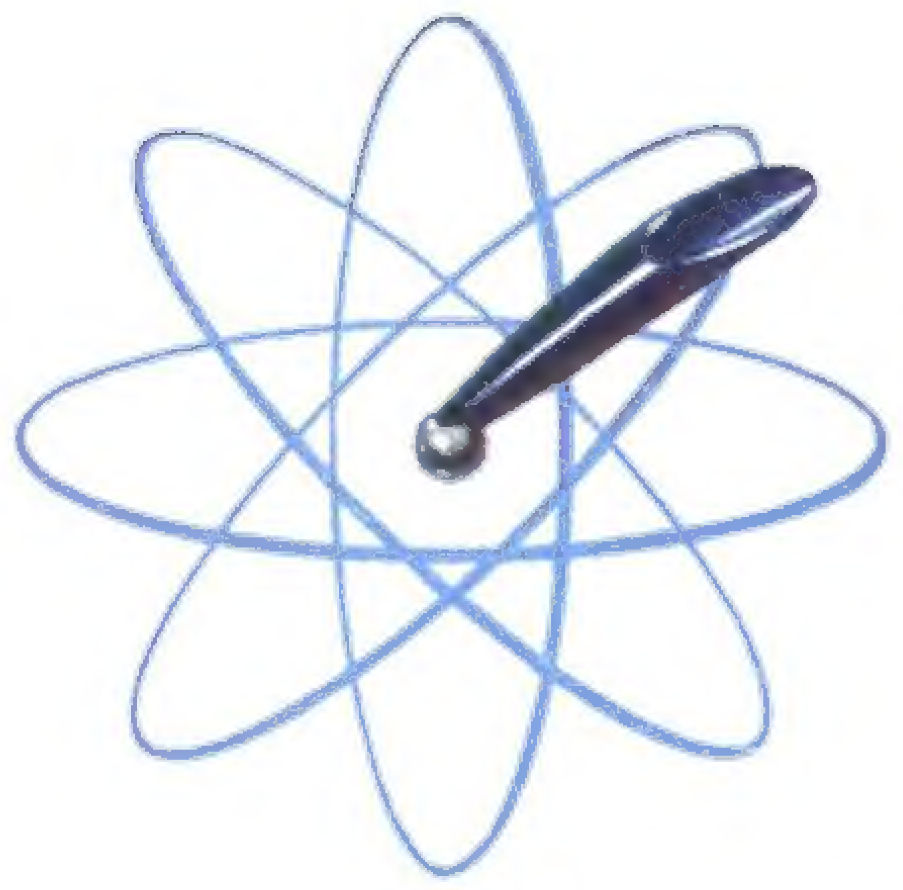

new...magnetic...

Parker "51"

MAGNETIX

Desk Sets



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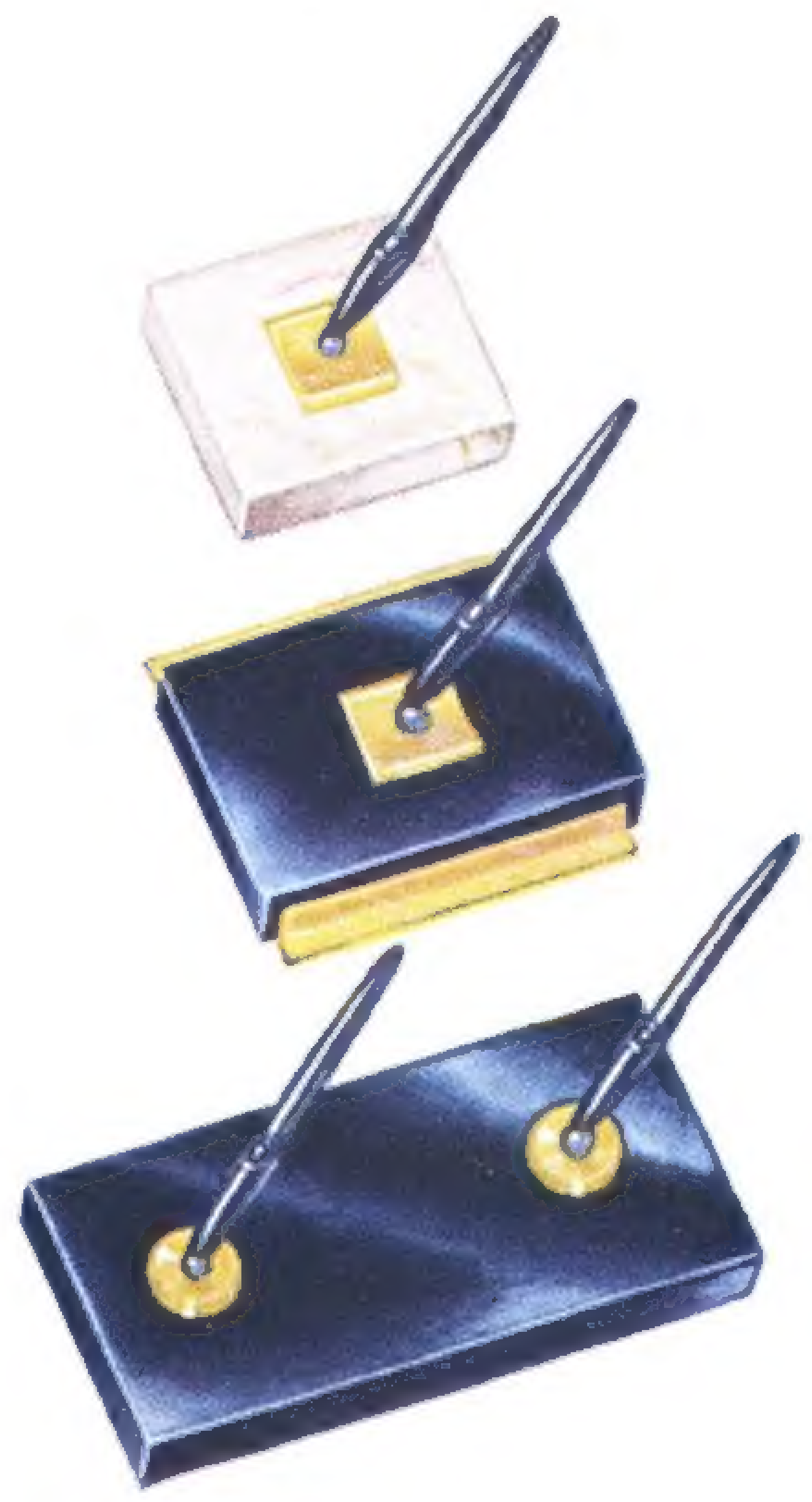

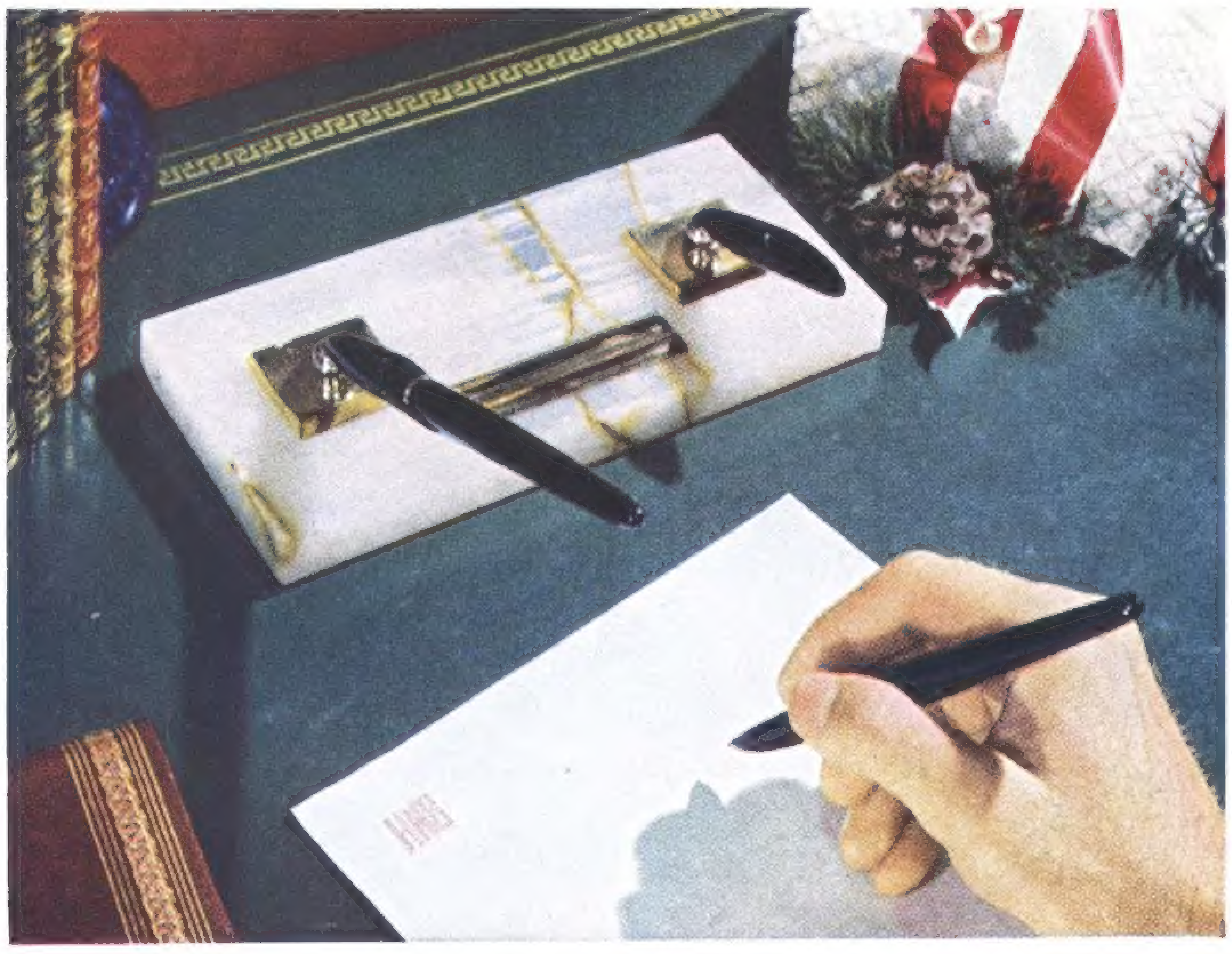

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Novel Idea

Our friend Henry Kane—dubbed "Hurry-Kane" by our pert office receptionist for reasons best known to her—appears in this issue as the author of the murder mystery *Armchair in Hell.*

We have mentioned elsewhere that we think this is a good novel, and we nodded approvingly when Mr. Kane flashed in front of us the colorful jacket Simon & Schuster has prepared for the book, which comes out in a few weeks. We also nodded approvingly as the author showed us pictures of his baby girl, recommended some good reading for our spare time (the works of Henry Kane) and demonstrated his extreme vitality by hefting a bar bell we happened to have in one corner of the office, don't ask why. We nodded approvingly but absent-mindedly, because we were thinking back over all the years that Esquire *hasn't* had a book-length feature. We never felt that anything was lacking over the course of these issues, but now that we've bound in all these pages of solid and satisfying text, we believe that Esquire readers—more than ever—just can't miss on an issue like this traditional January package. Because, you will discover, there are the holiday features, the regular Esquire features and fashions that you look for, and the hellish *Armchair* has been added to the complete furnishing of the issue without moving anything out to make room for it.

So, maybe you'll forgive our pride and find it justifiable in a time when your bread and butter (and ours) is costing almost as much as the silver platter-knife to spread it with, that we have stepped into a novel venture which brings you a book value over and above the regular Esquire fare.

We're making a New Year's Resolution on that, too, if you'd care to know. Esquire readers are going to have the best, and more of it.

Best wishes for '48 from us all.

—D.A.S.

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Esquire

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T.M.REG.

Editorial: Arms and the Man

Our mail has been very heavy recently, and very pointed, in addition, over a crime committed on page 77 of the October issue.

In Kodachrome, no less, we pictured a bunch of the boys spending a cool fall day out in the big woods, trying not to shoot each other full of holes. Our caption made a rather neat point of this, we felt, accenting the thought that it is better to bring home a grouse full of birdshot rather than your neighbor Mr. Heffleflinger, who is too heavy anyway to lash to the fender of your car.

It was a pretty page.

But the boys were carrying shotguns, and we called them rifles, an error which was pointed out more or less kindly by a Boy Scout in New Mexico, a retired schoolteacher in Vermont, a New York taxicab driver, a U.S. soldier stationed in Japan, and enough gun-toting subscribers from every neck of the woods to make us feel that the U.S. is still safe while every citizen has his shooting iron. A shotgun is not a rifle, they told us, or didn't you know?

Our face red enough to wear into the brush without the need of any deer hunter's cap, we took counsel. The history of journalism allows us several precedents.

The editor of one small newspaper, for example, having been chided for running a picture of Mr. Smith with the name of Mr. Jones under it, testily ran in his next edition a picture of Mr. Jones with Mr. Smith's name under it, thus acknowledging his critics without giving way to them.

Another publication went to the other extreme and whenever subscribers became indignant over certain missteps, an employee in the errant department was promptly fired. This worked fine until it came out that a mythical Mr. Beecham was kept on the pay roll solely for the purpose of being thrown off of it, and given the ax as a public sacrifice.

Not being of a mood to run another feature in which we would show some rifles and make amends by calling them shotguns, we therefore set to sharpening our snickersnee, and went out looking for Mr. Beecham's nephew. We intended to give him a choice—rifles or shotguns, and a firing squad behind the Stork Club at dawn.

We were surprised. And so will you be.

For the culprit is a hale and hearty young man, no bookworm, but a rugged character from the great Northwest, used to the ways of the big woods. On his desk rests *The Gun Digest.* This lad, you will be amazed further to discover, served in the U.S. Navy during the war as a gunnery officer aboard an LST. His record was flawless, one island invasion after the other. There was some talk at one time about his losing a couple of 45s (which he identified correctly), but he was cleared of this charge when it came out that they were lost during a skirmish offshore. It must be admitted that when a young man is wading through surf well-churned with enemy mortar fire and underwater mines he might not be as careful of his equipment as when wading, let us say, a Catskill trout stream.

To conclude, it was he who mislaid his shotguns this time and came up instead with a rifle in his teeth. The distraction this time, it turned out, was not the Japanese army, but a much more powerful deflection in the lissome form of a displaced person from another floor, a wench-about-the-office who finds our man's company stimulating. After weighing her possibilities as a distraction we finally concluded that Esquire is indeed fortunate that our gunnery expert only called the shotgun a rifle instead of a ruffle.

His sentence: to read all of the letters from our understandably troubled readers, to repeat one thousand times *arma virumque cano* and to communicate with the beauteous D.P. during business hours only after her passage into the Russian (or editorial) Zone has been okayed by officials in that sector, already drunk with the power of red tape.

It won't happen again.

For your interest and to prove that we know something about shooting irons, the shotgun shown on this page is an L. C. Smith field-grade double-barrel, 20 gauge. The rifle is a .257 caliber Johnson Mauser Sporter.

* * *

Our big gun in this issue is Mr. Henry Kane, author of *Armchair in Hell*, the complete book-length feature you will find starting on page 99, and who, if you can ever get away from the frontispiece by Al Moore, carries you along for forty-odd pages of murder, mayhem, and other excitements of life among the private eyes. You have your Esquire, and you have this murder mystery too, and we warn you not to start reading it too late in the evening, for you'll have valises under your eyes the next morning. There's no putting it down, once you get going: definitely a one-night stand. So the editors of Simon & Schuster feel, too, we understand, as they prepare to publish the story in book form.

We can't help feeling set up a bit that our New Year's issue brings you this possible resolution—that of a murder, told in Kane's machine-gun style. If you were feeling a little low that the Magazine For Men didn't know how many barrels to roll out for October be sure that our sights were really set when we saw this one coming. You may fire when ready, Gridley. ᚔ

Sorry!

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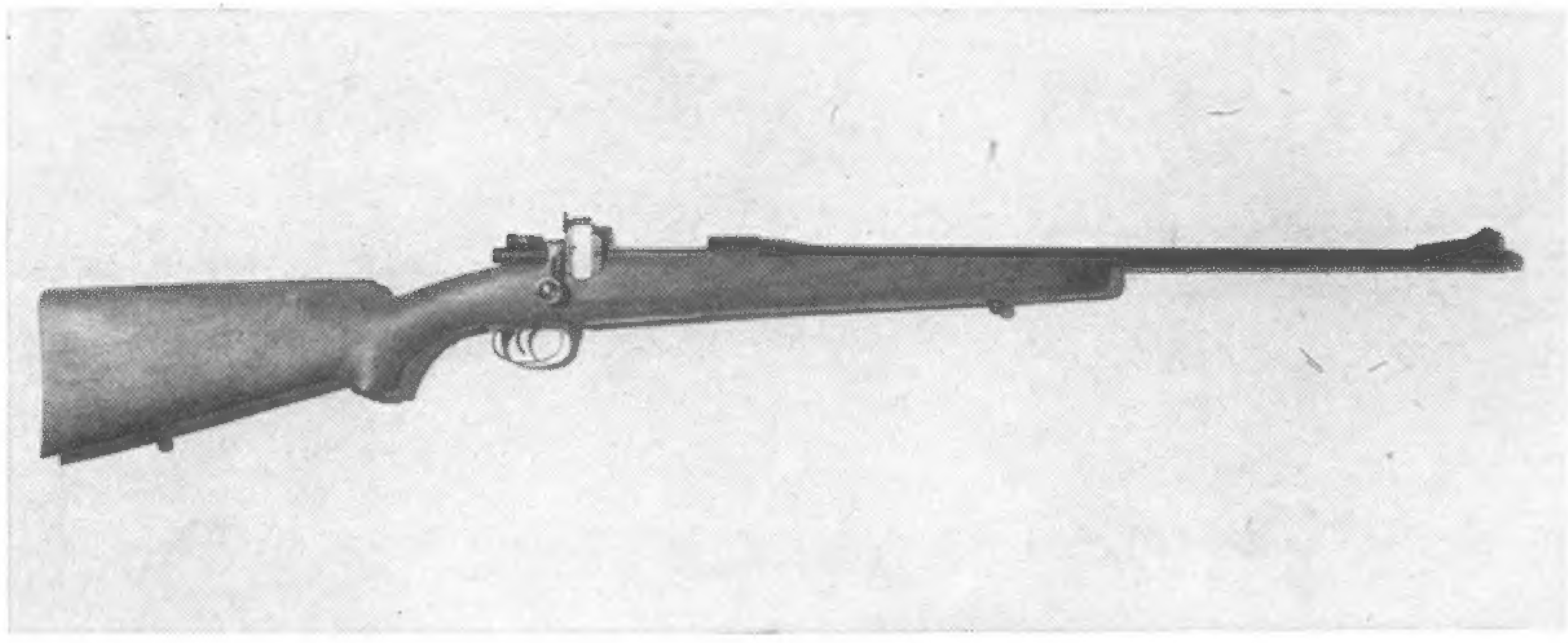
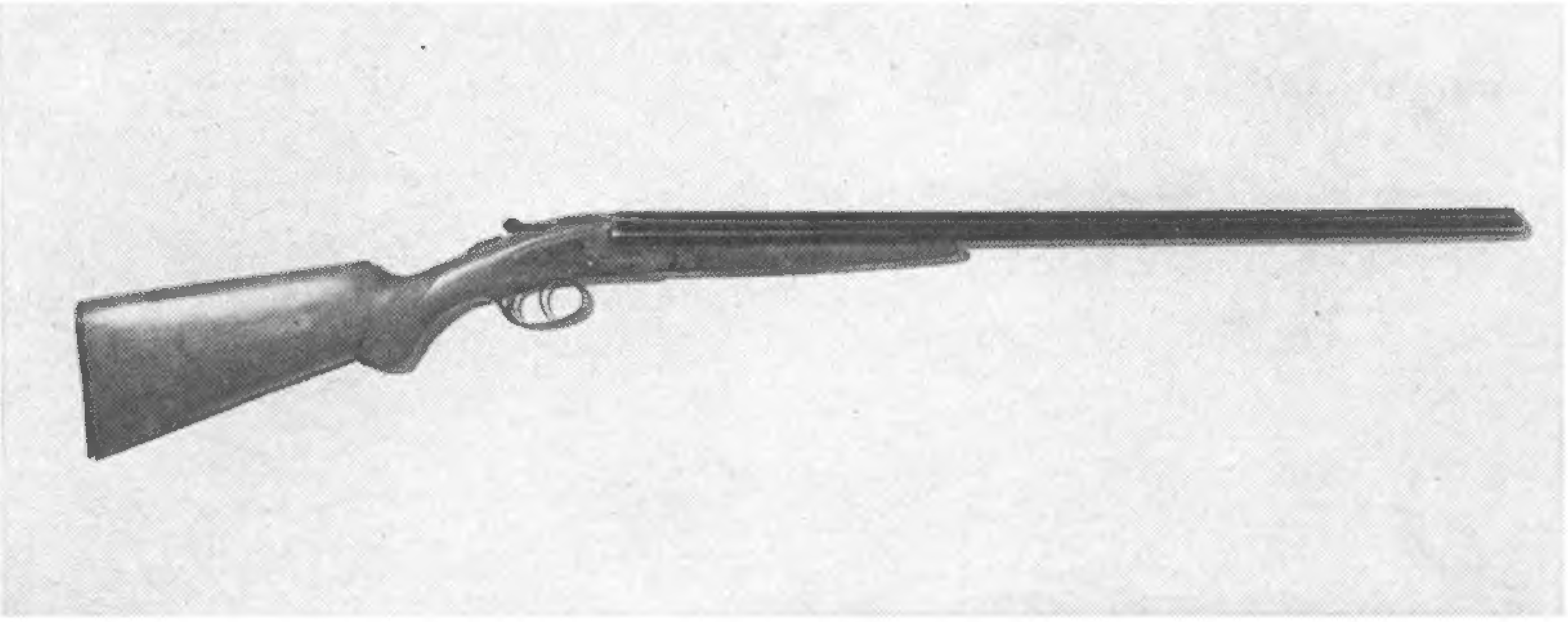
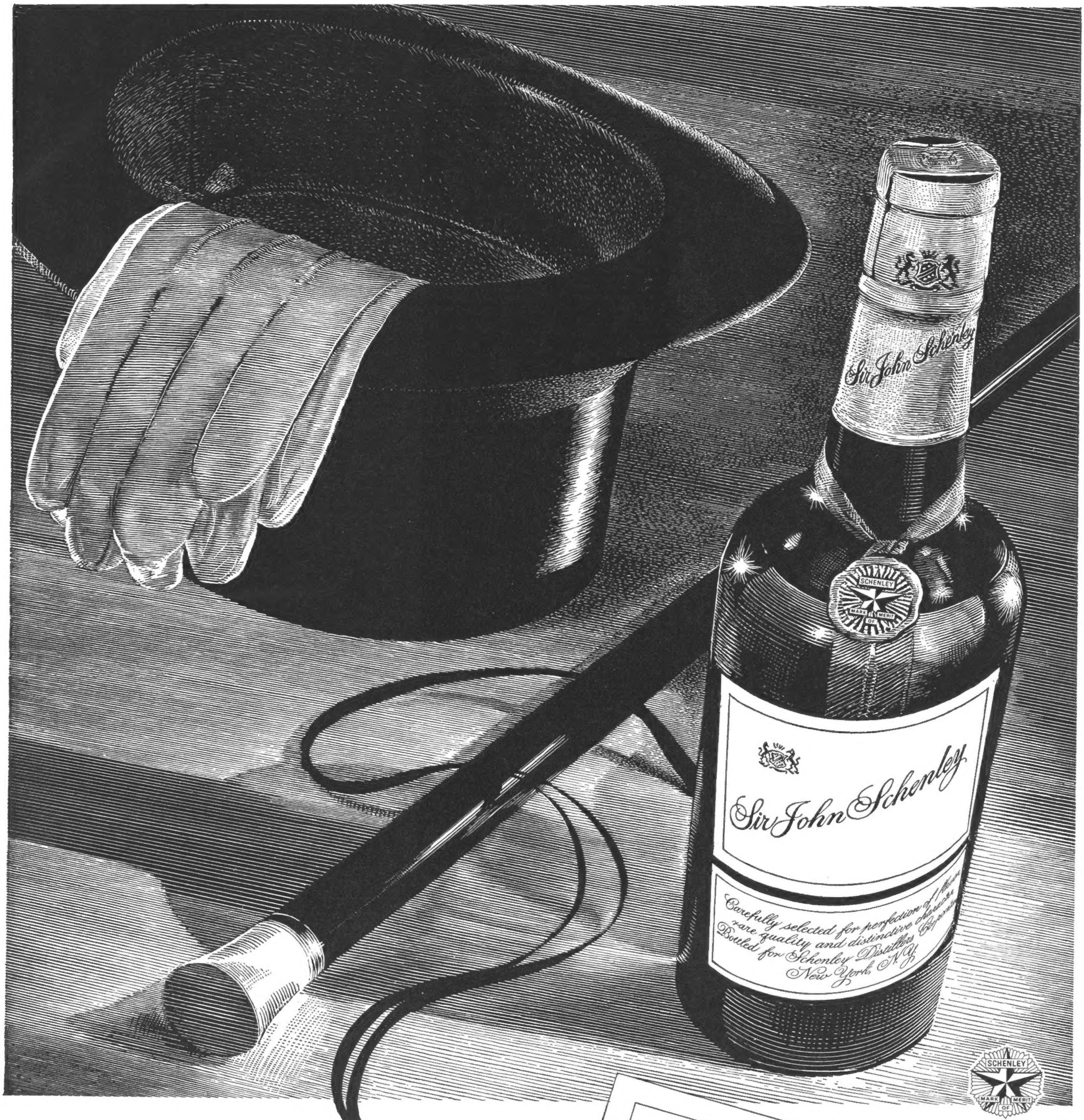
HUNTING ETIQUETTE



This is a rifle



This is a shotgun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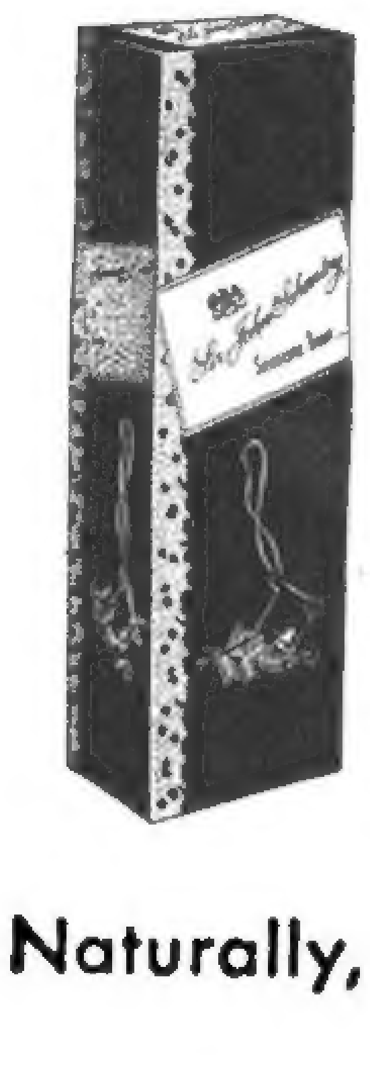

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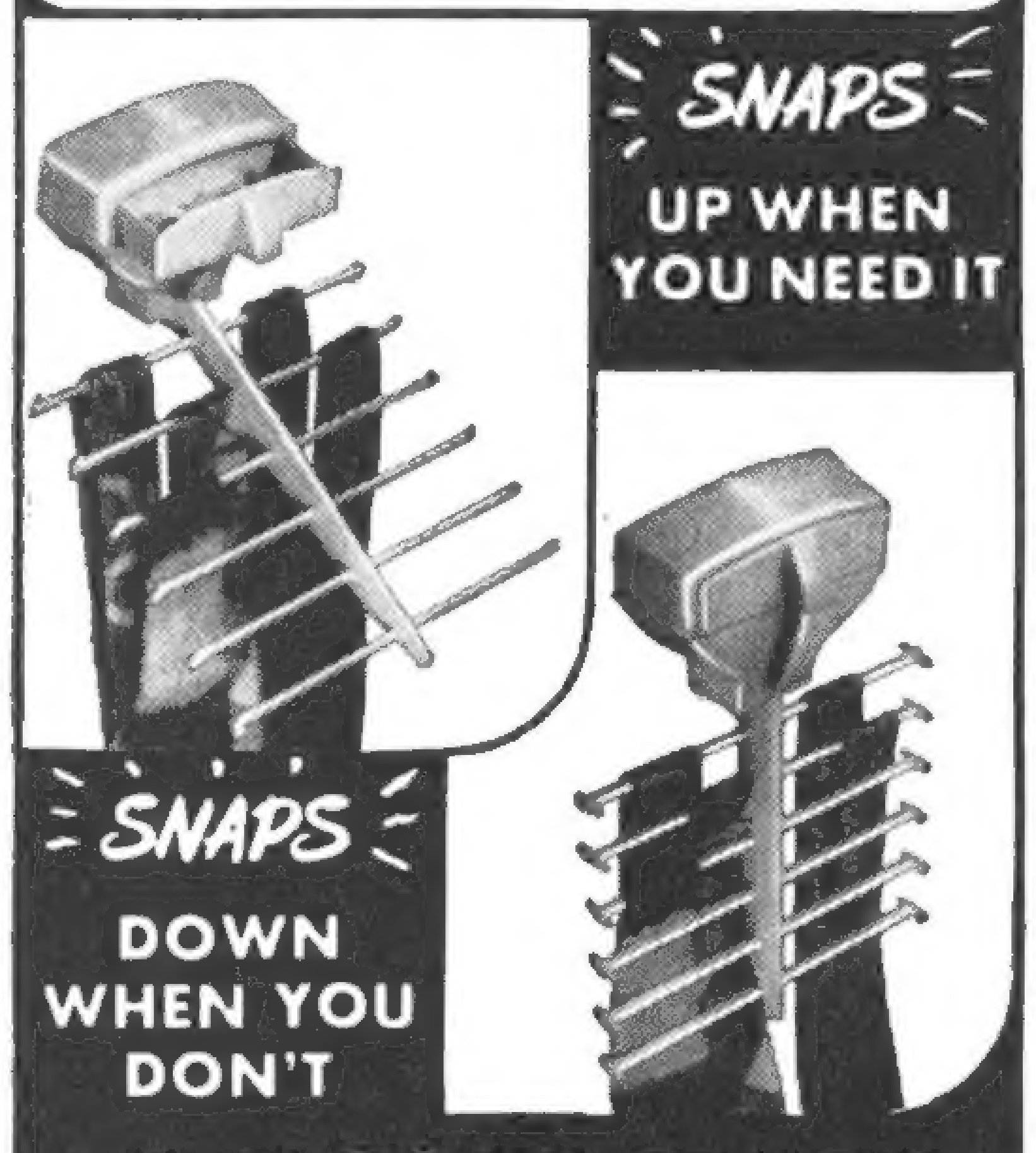

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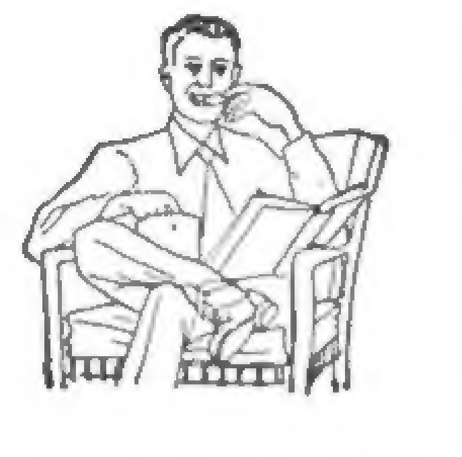
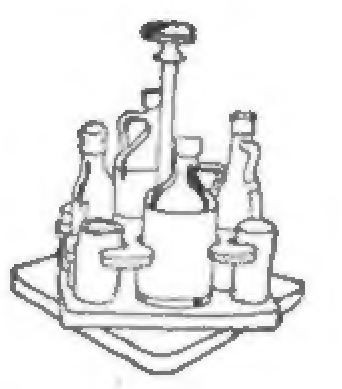
Talking Shop with Esquire

CHEESE, PLEASE. Ask any guy what type of food gift he'd relish, and he'd probably say "cheese". No ordinary rat cheese, mind you, but you make a production out of it. A cheese set, for instance. A neat wood cheese cutting board, a slim serrated cheese knife which fits into a groove in the board, and strapped to the board with fancy schmancy ribbon, an imported gouda and a camembert!

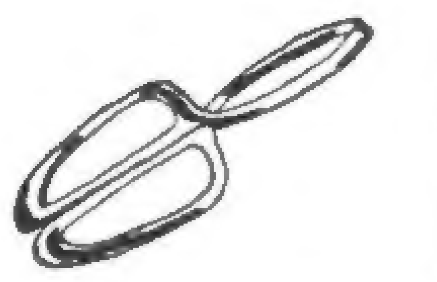
COOKIES NOT TOO SWEET. A large impressive tin box duped up to look like oxidized silver. Box is filled with biscuits . . . every possible ilk. Good munchers, and not great weight-adders.



LAZY SUSAN. Chaps who like to cook to a gourmet's taste, will appreciate an obliging little wooden stand which revolves, serving up rare herbs, vinegars and herb salts. Or a deluxe wicker basket filled with amazing bounty . . . English teas, herbs, vinegars, garlic, tarragon variety, mint tea, plus three 1 oz. jars of herbs.



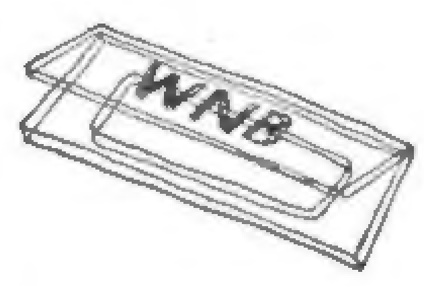
MUDDLER AND SIPPER. Here's an ideal gift for that charming young couple who invited you over for drinks so often. A 10″ sterling silver muddler which is also a hollow tubed sipper. Or a special new sipper-muddler with an added pick on the muddle end with which to spear the lemon in your collins, the cherry in your planters. And don't overlook a pair of sterling silver tongs with a tenacious grip which will handle ice, hors d'oeuvres or sugar. Work on a new scissors-like principle. The best we've seen to date.



CHESS PLAYERS WILL LOVE IT. This luxury gift should be awarded top prize for its individuality. There's a unique cocktail tray with matching highball glasses designed in the form of a game of chess. The chessboard tray comes in clear lucite with daring black squares, or in milk-tinted jade with red or green squares. Glasses also have the chess design, and the set of highball stirrers are topped with crowns of gold. If you're trying to make an impression, this is the gift for you to give.

WHAT'S YOURS, SIR? A gold-plated placque about the size of a coaster, to hang around the top of a liquor bottle. Placque contains 20 different recipes for drinks. Just dial and the recipe you want appears in an aperture.

GIFT FOR ORGANIZATIONS. Send your clients a personalized gift. Such as a plexiglass cigarette case which holds a whole pack of cigarettes. It's 4″ wide, and because of its 9″ length, looks important on a desk, and expensive (which it isn't). Upon the crystal-like cover, you put three large block initials to wham out that "just for you" touch.



OFFICE GIFT to the boss might be a dictionary. Don't laugh. This one is strictly deluxe, done in bright red limp cover leather with a handsome 20 carat gold design and edges. Also, it's an emphatype edition, said to be the newest and most usable system of pronunciation-at-a-glance. In addition to the usual 145,000 words, it contains 5000 new ones!

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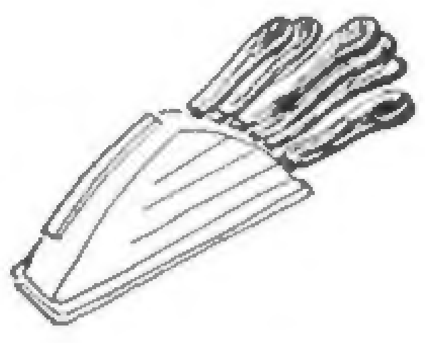

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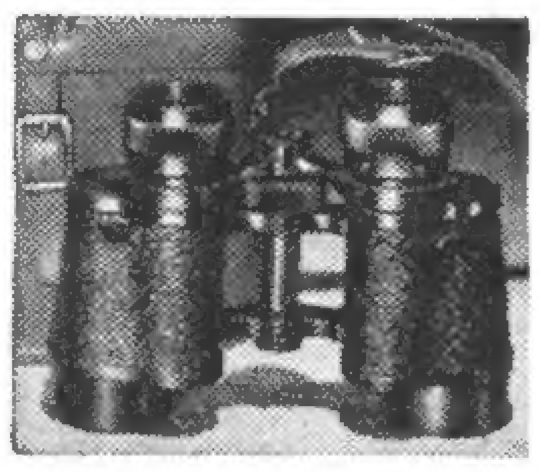

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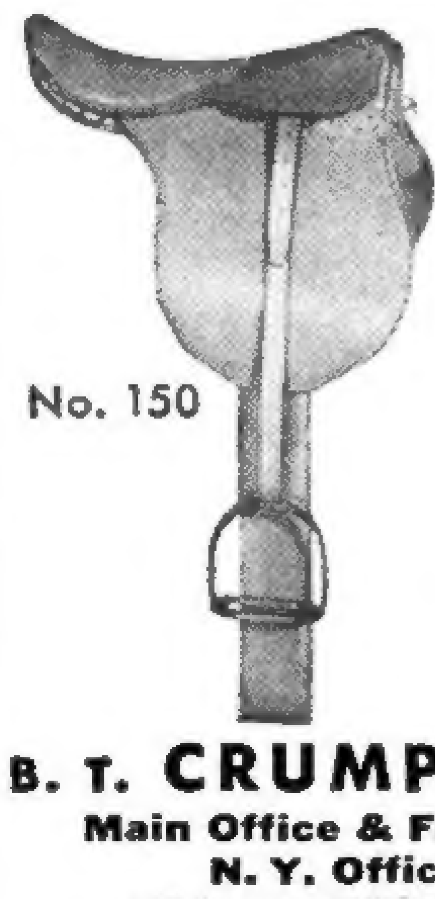

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New "PEEL-OFF" PALETTE takes the bother out of painting—eliminates messy "clean-ups." Just peel off top sheet and Presto! . . . a fresh, paint-free working surface is ready to use. Each palette contains 50 specially processed sheets, impervious to all mediums. *The perfect gift for professionals and amateurs alike!*

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The Sound and the Fury

talking Turkish

Esquire continues to be quite a thoroughly enjoyed magazine about these parts. The Gallery is a vast improvement over former creations. They have something of the characteristics usually ascribed to the human being.

Does anyone know of any Turks about who might want to exchange a few letters? (In the post-Ataturk anglicized alphabet, please!) For some inexplicable reason the army started this one on the road to learning Turkish before the happy day of being sent out to the Pacific.

Ed Noble, Jr.

Girard, Pa.

minority report

The chief defense posed by Andrew A. Rooney's *In Defense of Hollywood* (September) seems to be that there are hundreds of trashy novels and bum legit plays and amateurish foreign films, thus by comparison Hollywood isn't so bad after all.

Here is a neat trick of rationalization. We have, as Mr. Rooney points out, all the technical skill required and the money to buy the best of everything. But what amount of modern photographic equipment and top tax bracket stars could replace the sincerity and force of feeling in *Man's Hope* or *Open City*?

Until Hollywood can live up to its possibilities Mr. Rooney can have my place in the line at the Palace on most occasions and I'll join that ever-growing queue in front of the foreign film theatres.

Denise McCluggage

Topeka, Kan.

parlez-vous Walloon?

How about sending the complete address of the character in Belgium who wants to study English (God help him) via the Atlantic? I'd be glad to louse him up with some good Calif. slang.

By the way, isn't that request a polite snub to the British Old School and their grammatical perfectionism? It reminds me of a big game hunter walking up to a Lion, King of the Jungle, to tap him gently on the muzzle and remind him that, if he doesn't roar more like a lion, he's jolly well going to go find himself another lion.

Anyway, send along the info as I could use some of the help in French he offered.

Larry Kinney

Burbank, Calif.

Esky as pigeon

(1)

Great Guns! Mighty purty deer hunters outfits them New York game wardens are wearing to hunt birds, and those double barrel "rifles?" Tch! Tch! The boy scouts, who read your excellent magazine, are going to be mighty riled when they read those captions. Most any tenderfoot-scout knows the difference between "scatter-guns" and rifles.

Suggest putting a pair of snow-shoes on those wardens and let them "ski" down Wall Street and bag a big, bad bear for the sporting goods store that furnished the equipment.

J. T. Poling

Phoenix, Ariz.

(2)

While it is true that the suggestions and advice you offer with the hunting pictures are both good and appropriate for the two types of weapons, please, let us not get fouled up on our fowling pieces.

Philip C. Hingston

Seaside, Ore.

(3)

Page 6, October, 1947, Esquire:

"In New York await lean and learned researchers, bristling with knowledge and questions, who pounce on every piece for factual inaccuracies."

Page 77, October, 1947, Esquire:

Feature entitled *Hunting Etiquette* pictures four New York game wardens armed with shotguns. Captions read:

"Safety with rifle begins before you reach the field."

"A rifle is a lethal thing and you would rather have birds than your friends for trophies."

Now, Mr. Editor, couldn't you spare one of those "lean and learned researchers" to look over your picture captions before Esquire goes to press?

Wesley E. Farmer

Los Angeles, Calif.

look and laugh

Life here in the Philippines is not too wonderful in some respects—but we saw an old copy of your magazine the other day, one of a series of prints called *Look and Cook*. It gave us a very fine feeling.

Can you tell me how I can buy copies of the magazine containing this series? We would like to frame them *all* in fine native woods, place them carefully in the kitchen and look at them while opening cans.

L. B. Welch

Philippine Islands

design for racing

We beg of you to spare an inch or so of the space at your disposal to hear the tale of woe about two model race car enthusiasts.

It will be appreciated that detailed information on anything that goes really fast is practically unobtainable in this country (except the American Loan).

We can but hope, therefore, that some of your readers, somewhere, will have, lying idle in junk rooms and such places, design details and drawings of body, chassis, suspension engine, wheels, etc., of would-be record breaking model cars.

We can assure you that shortly after receipt of the aforesaid "rubbish," the record will steadily be pushed around until, finally, you will be asking *us* for the "gen."

Alan W. Roscoe
C. R. Eastwood

Lancashire, England

Moffitt's advocate

Your July number is just to hand. When I came across the letter from B. Juppe castigating Jack Moffitt I said to myself . . . "Dammit! What do these fellows want?" I grant that his philosophical discourses on the business of picture making are at times longwinded, but one can forgive a chap a little peccadillo like that in view of the delightful moments his readers enjoy with his elegant diction and candid opinions. How many papers can afford to have a critic that will speak his mind without an eye cocked on the advertisement contracts? I say . . . long may Moffitt's feature flourish in Esquire and may they be as long as you allow them to be so that his income tax will be commensurate with his syntax.

Ferdinand Raphael

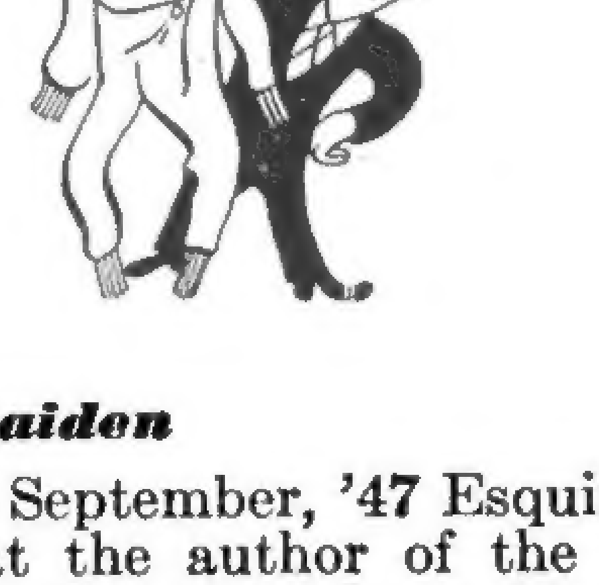
Cape Province, So. Africa

island paradise

Have just finished reading an article in September's Esquire by Douglas Angus called *The Witness at the Crossroads* which I thought was a wonderful article and really expresses something that I have felt for some time. To me there is no place like the Marshalls. Most people judge Kwajalein and the Marshalls by the ATC Terminal and the transient mess and quarters, but there are many nice places on Kwajalein and the other islands. I can realize the plight of Carl Henderson in passing over and wanting to seclude himself on one of those reefs far from civilization, if I had my way I would pick Bigej or as we Americans call it Bennett Island. Some day I hope to go back to the Marshalls to see the sun set at night and look out over the lagoon and watch the waves roll up on the beach.

Thomas P. Cunningham
1st Lt. Sig. Corps

8th Army Signal School



snow maiden

In the September, '47 Esquire I believe that the author of the picture *Understanding* may have his figures correct but his science is in error. I have been under the impression, having been living under a body temperature of 98.6° F. so far, that the female of the species does also; but if not I have some red flannels she may borrow.

Thaddeus W. Weuclawik

Woonsocket, R. I.

the compleat fan

I was more than a little surprised on reading your September and October issues to find that Jack Moffitt fails to mention that certain films reviewed are merely remakes by Hollywood producers of foreign films which they have bought up and suppressed. I saw one of the first of these over a year ago: *Heartbeat*, the Hollywood version of *Battement de Coeur* (Danielle Darrieux), was not an improvement and put Ginger Rogers beyond her depth.

Now in his September reviews, Jack Moffitt makes no reference to a very good French film, *Mort du Cygne*, made with the collaboration of the National Ballet in Paris, when giving an otherwise good review of *Unfinished Dance*. Again in October he fails to credit French artists for the originals of *Lured* and *The Long Night*. As a reader I am convinced from his comprehensive reviews that they do not stand up to the originals: *Pièges* (Maurice Chevalier and Marie Dea) and *Le Jour se Lève* (Jean Gabin) and will be quite happy to pass up the movies when they appear locally.

It wouldn't hurt to give credit where credit is due. Hollywood surely can stand that, and a lot more too.

Mac Hitsman

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

the moot Mikado

Two things have happened today that have tied up together too well to let slide.

1. I came across an unthumbed, and fairly modern copy of Esquire—an event in itself. It was your May issue.

I started at the beginning and I must lay my hands on all I can find of Paul Gallico. It isn't only America that seems to have studied at the Gallico House school of finance and economics.

2. I found the attached in the day's *Malay Mail*.

Perhaps it may amuse you.

I'll remain anonymous, as regular soldiers are quite rightly not encouraged to air their views in papers.

Kuala Lumpur, Malaya

The Mikado

Our great MacArthur, virtuous man,
The new Mikado of Japan,
A plan has made
To foster trade
By healthy competition.
While hordes of enterprising Yanks
Can start up businesses and banks,
To Britons he replies "No, thanks!"
Refusing them admission.
Chorus:
And all Americans agree
That he is right to so decree,
And they are right
And he is right,
And everyone is right but we.

The British, you can understand,
Don't find his attitude so grand.
To friends so old
The shoulder cold
Is not what they expected.
"We also fought the Japs," they cry,
"Why is it that when we apply
To trade with them some Yankee guy
Steps in and we're rejected?"
Chorus:
And you'll allow, as I expect,
That they are right to so object.
If they are right
Can he be right?
They cannot both be quite correct.

ĕs-kwīr'

For the benefit of the radio announcers I monitor, will you kindly tell me which syllable of the name of your magazine is accented? Webster's Dictionary authorizes only the accent on the second syllable, but many persons in referring to your magazine, accent the first syllable.

Wickes Wamboldt

Asheville, N. C.

Continued on page 167

Once again it's time to make a bowl of

Merry Christmas!

The ingredients: Here's all you need for the finest "Bowl of Merry Christmas" ever made—a Four Roses Eggnog:

Six eggs . . . ¾ cup sugar . . . 1 pint cream . . . 1 pint milk . . . 1 oz. Jamaica Rum . . . 1 pint Four Roses . . . grated nutmeg.

The procedure: Beat separately yolks and whites of eggs. Add ½ cup sugar to yolks while beating. Add ¼ cup sugar to whites after they have been beaten very stiff. Mix egg whites with yolks. Stir in cream and milk. Add the pint of Four Roses and the rum. Stir thoroughly. Serve very cold, with grated nutmeg.

The delightful result: A bowlful (five pints) of the fluffiest, grandest Eggnog ever ladled into a cup . . . thanks to the magnificent flavor of that matchless whiskey—Four Roses.

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Fine Blended Whiskey—90.5 proof, 40% straight whiskies, 60% grain neutral spirits.

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For the Christmas season —America's Favorite Gift Whiskey in a beautiful gift carton.

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at better stores everywhere

A light!
Automatically! Every time!

Every time this slim beauty serves a cigarette, it gives a light automatically with the closing click. Every time this gift is used, it's a bright reminder of your thoughtfulness.

Distinguished by the perfection of detail and precise craftmanship for which *Elgin American* is famous.

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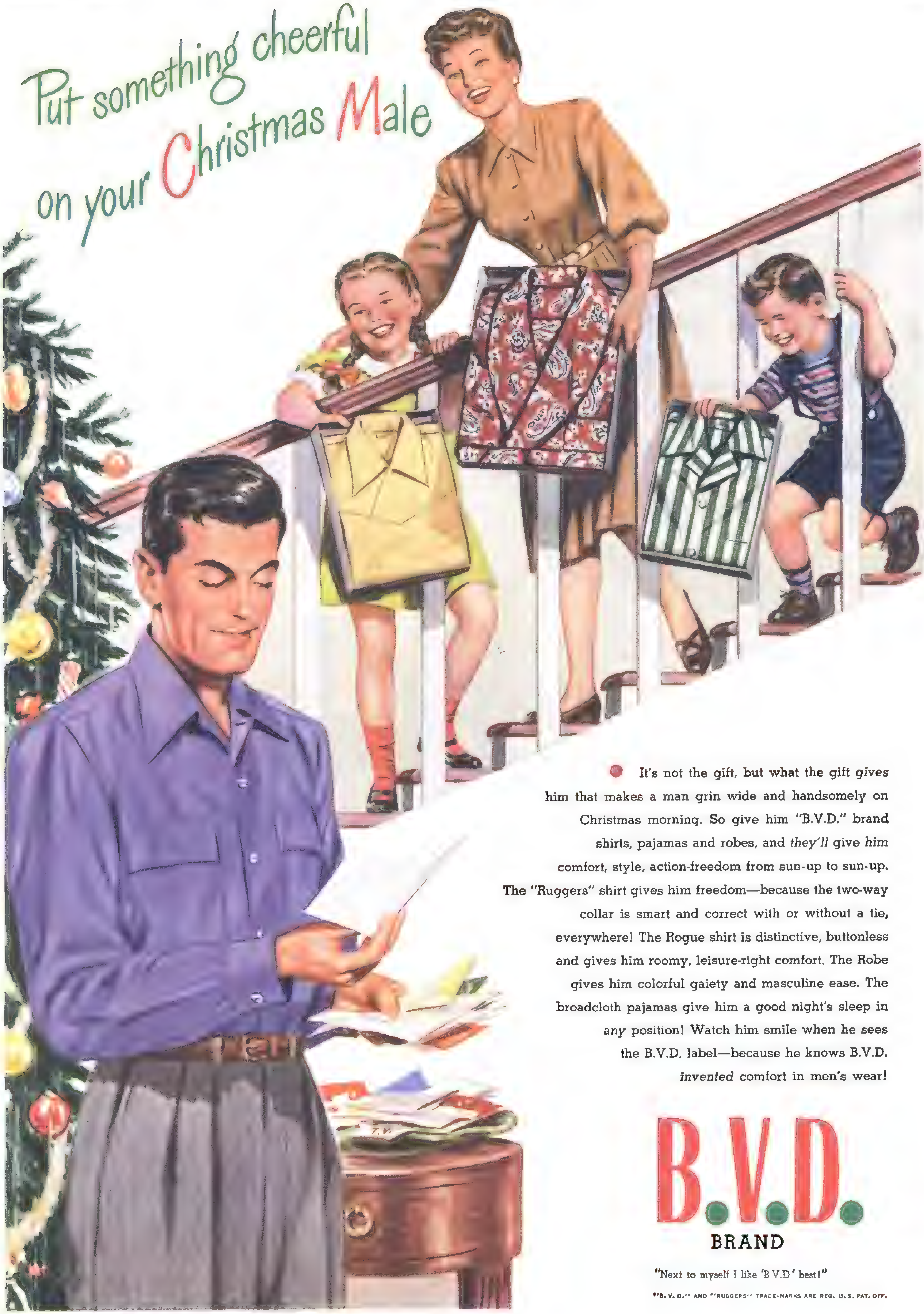


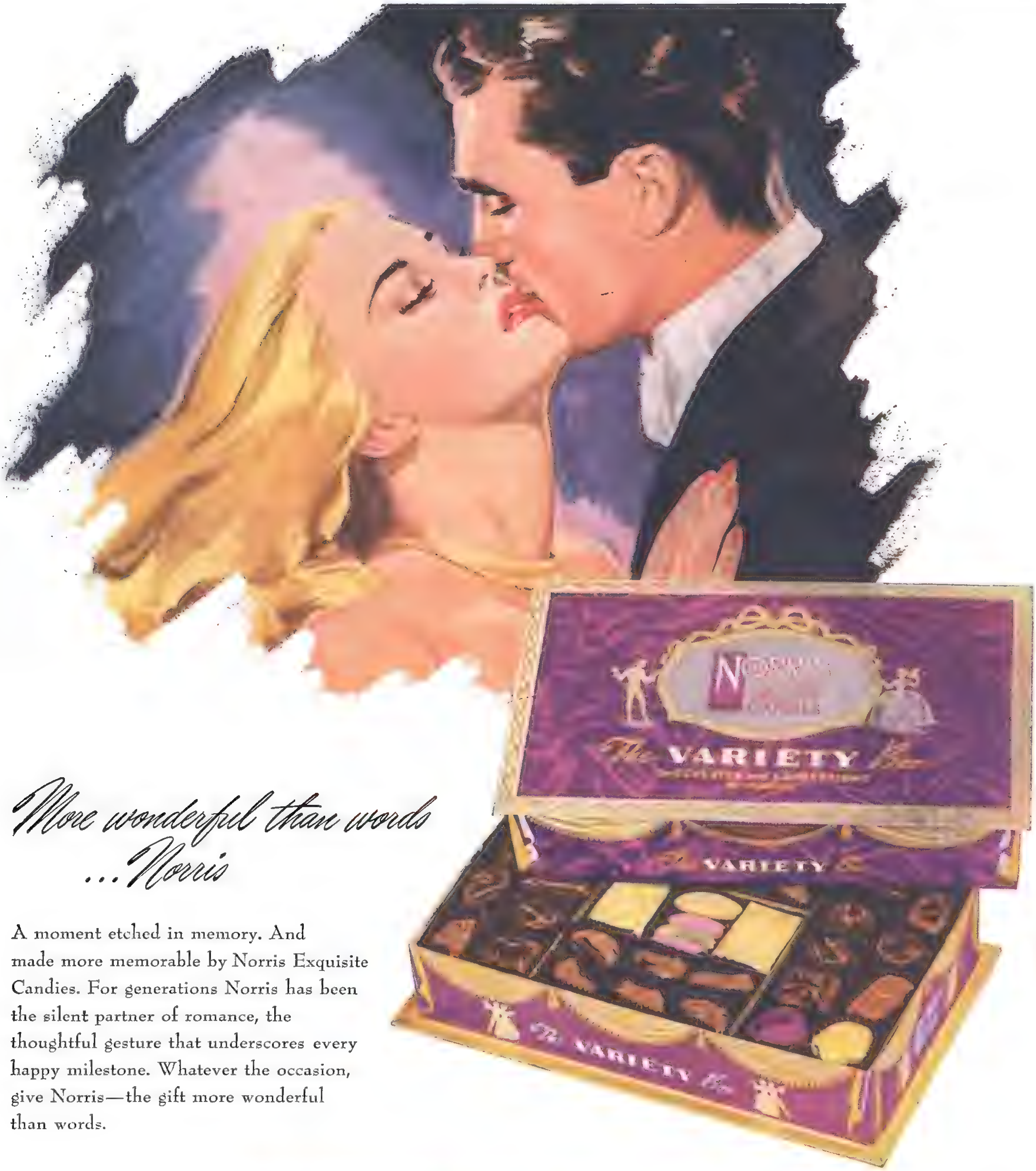
● It's not the gift, but what the gift *gives* him that makes a man grin wide and handsomely on Christmas morning. So give him "B.V.D." brand shirts, pajamas and robes, and *they'll* give *him* comfort, style, action-freedom from sun-up to sun-up. The "Ruggers" shirt gives him freedom—because the two-way collar is smart and correct with or without a tie, everywhere! The Rogue shirt is distinctive, buttonless and gives him roomy, leisure-right comfort. The Robe gives him colorful gaiety and masculine ease. The broadcloth pajamas give him a good night's sleep in *any* position! Watch him smile when he sees the B.V.D. label—because he knows B.V.D. *invented* comfort in men's wear!

B.V.D.

BRAND

"Next to myself I like 'B.V.D.' best!"

"B. V. D." AND "RUGGERS" TRADE-MARKS ARE REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.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The Variety Box
The Variety Box

More wonderful than words ...Norris

A moment etched in memory. And made more memorable by Norris Exquisite Candies. For generations Norris has been the silent partner of romance, the thoughtful gesture that underscores every happy milestone. Whatever the occasion, give Norris—the gift more wonderful than words.

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HAVANA CIGARS
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CORONAS Clear Havana Hand Made Long Filler 5" long Box of 50— $6.50

Enjoy the utmost in smoking pleasure. Only clear Havana cigars, made by hand, shipped FRESH direct from factory to you, can give you such luxury smoking.

All Cubano Cigars are made of choice 100% Havana tobaccos—wrapper, binder, filler. Hence their fragrant richness, mellow flavor, smooth drawing, even burning. And by ordering direct you save HALF the usual price.

Tell us whether you like light, medium or dark wrappers, mild or pungent fillers. We'll make the cigars to suit your individual taste.

ORDER ON APPROVAL. Smoke 2 or 3. If not delighted, return the remainder and we will refund the *full price. Order today.*

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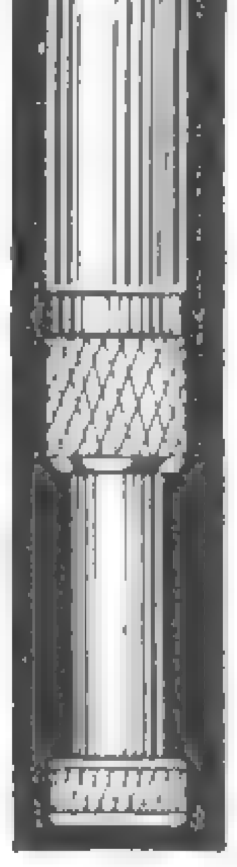
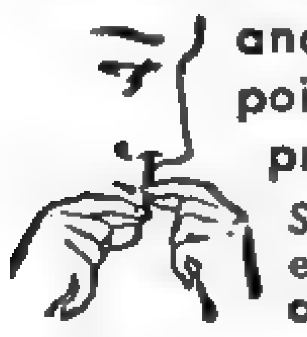
CUBANO CIGAR CO. KEY WEST, FLA.

DON'T PULL HAIR FROM NOSE
May Cause Fatal Infection

Use the Hollis KLIPETTE
REG.U.S.PAT.OFF.
ROTATING SCISSORS



You can cause serious infection by pulling hair from nose. Ordinary scissors are also dangerous and impractical. There is no better way to remove hair from nose and ears than with KLIPETTE. Smooth, gentle, safe and efficient. Rounded points cannot cut or prick the skin.



SO SIMPLE! Just turn the end. Surplus hair clipped off gently, safely.

$1 Made from fine Surgical Steel. Chromium plated—also in 24 Kt. Gold Plate in smart leather case at $3.50 (plus 70c Federal Tax)—a perfect gift for any *special* occasion.

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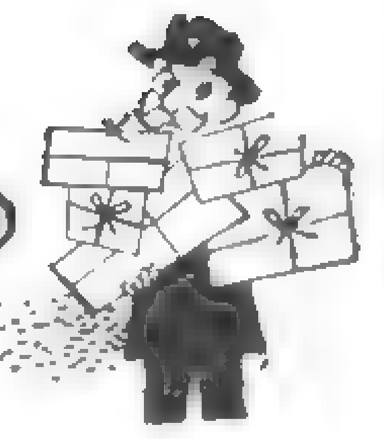
Enclosed is $.............. for .... KLIPETTE(S) at $1 (no tax);............in gold plate at $3.50 (plus 70c Federal Tax). If I'm not entirely satisfied, I may return the above for refund within 10 days.

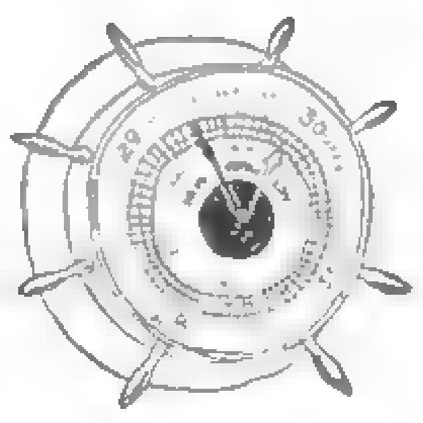
Name______________________

Address____________________

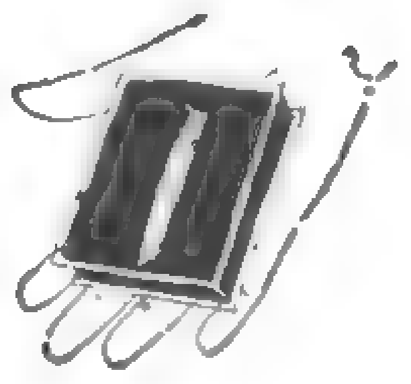
Talking Shop with Esquire



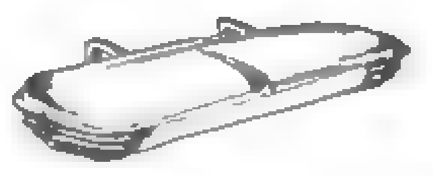
AIR GUIDE THERMOMETER. Chaps who plan weekends in the great outdoors fishing, golfing, etc., will like a barometer which will give accurate weather information 12 to 24 hours in advance. Tells when fishing is best. The barometer is housed in a heavy brass case shaped like a ship's wheel. Other novelty clocks go big as gifts, also . . . such as the combination spring wound clock and music box which you set to wake you up to tinkling strains at the desired hour. A swell electric kitchen clock for a bachelor apartment is done in copper or stainless steel in the shape of a frying pan. Hangs from the handle on the wall. Numerals and sweep second hand blaze forth in bright colors. A dandy.



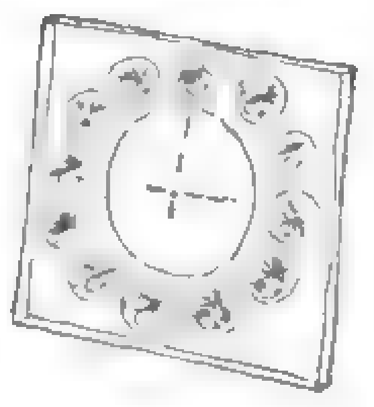
MIDGET BALL POINT. Here's the all-time height of ingenuity . . . an honest-to-goodness ball point pen mounted on a tie clasp! No larger or longer than a standard clasp, yet the ball point works in good order . . . leak proof, they say, so it can't dribble on your tie. Pen and clip are in 24 kt. gold plate. A nifty item for golfers, sportsmen, etc.



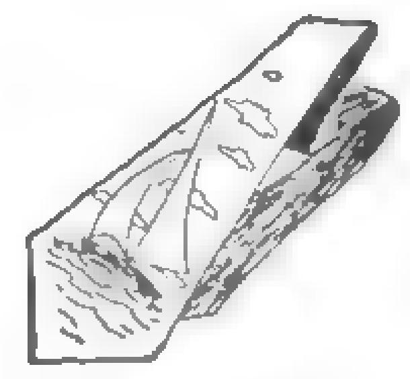
PUT OUT THE LIGHT BEFORE SHE DIVORCES YOU. If you know fellows who read in bed until the wee sma' hours, forestall marital crackups with a fluorescent bed lamp. The new lamp provides a panel of illumination sufficiently compact so that the reader won't disturb a sleeping companion, yet the plane of illumination is broad enough to be adequate. Rays are directed at a scientifically determined angle for reading comfort. Light is bright, yet glareless. Another excellent point, the lamp is streamlined so as not to protrude from the bed headboard. Its extremely narrow profile is practically inconspicuous.



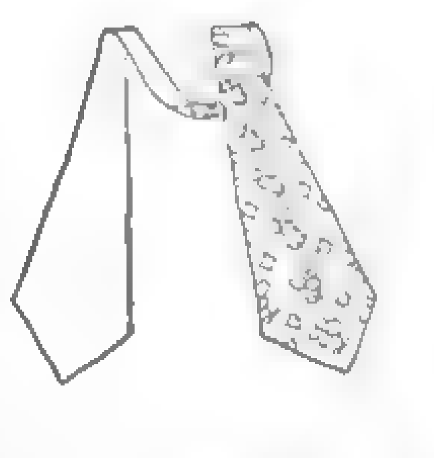
FISHERMAN'S CLOCK. Every angler will angle for one of these beauties. An 8-inch square of heavy lucite, the hours represented by trout flies (under plastic) in 12 different colors. The minute and hour hands are made to represent miniature casting rods. To go with the clock, there's a letter holder with a wooden base, lucite sides containing two enlarged trout flies in gorgeous hues.



PHOTOGRAPHS ON A NECKTIE. If you haven't seen the new process of photographic reproduction on fabrics, get hep . . . somebody would like a gift of same. Photone, as it is called, is a new process which develops a photo direct onto a fabric achieving a third-dimensional quality, rather than flat tones. The photone process is new in so much as the fabric itself is treated just like photographic paper. It is sensitized, then brought into contact with the film containing the image of design. Light shining through the film prints the design on the fabric. It is then developed. Men's ties are done on rayon satin, decorated with action photographs of sailboats and other sports themes. Colors are muted tones of blue, grey, brown, red, yellow or black.



HALF AND HALF TIE. Another novelty made in Italy. Pure silk tie, half of the length in a solid color, the other half in a printed design. Idea is that you get two ties for one. You wear the solid end around your neck and appear to be wearing a print tie and vice versa. Same shop has stunning Italian hand woven pure knubby silk ties, and unusual roman striped scarfs in eye-pleasing combination such as royal, light blue and beige with a gold stripe, etc.



Ranger

For answers to all queries, send self-addressed stamped envelope to Ranger, Esquire, 366 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

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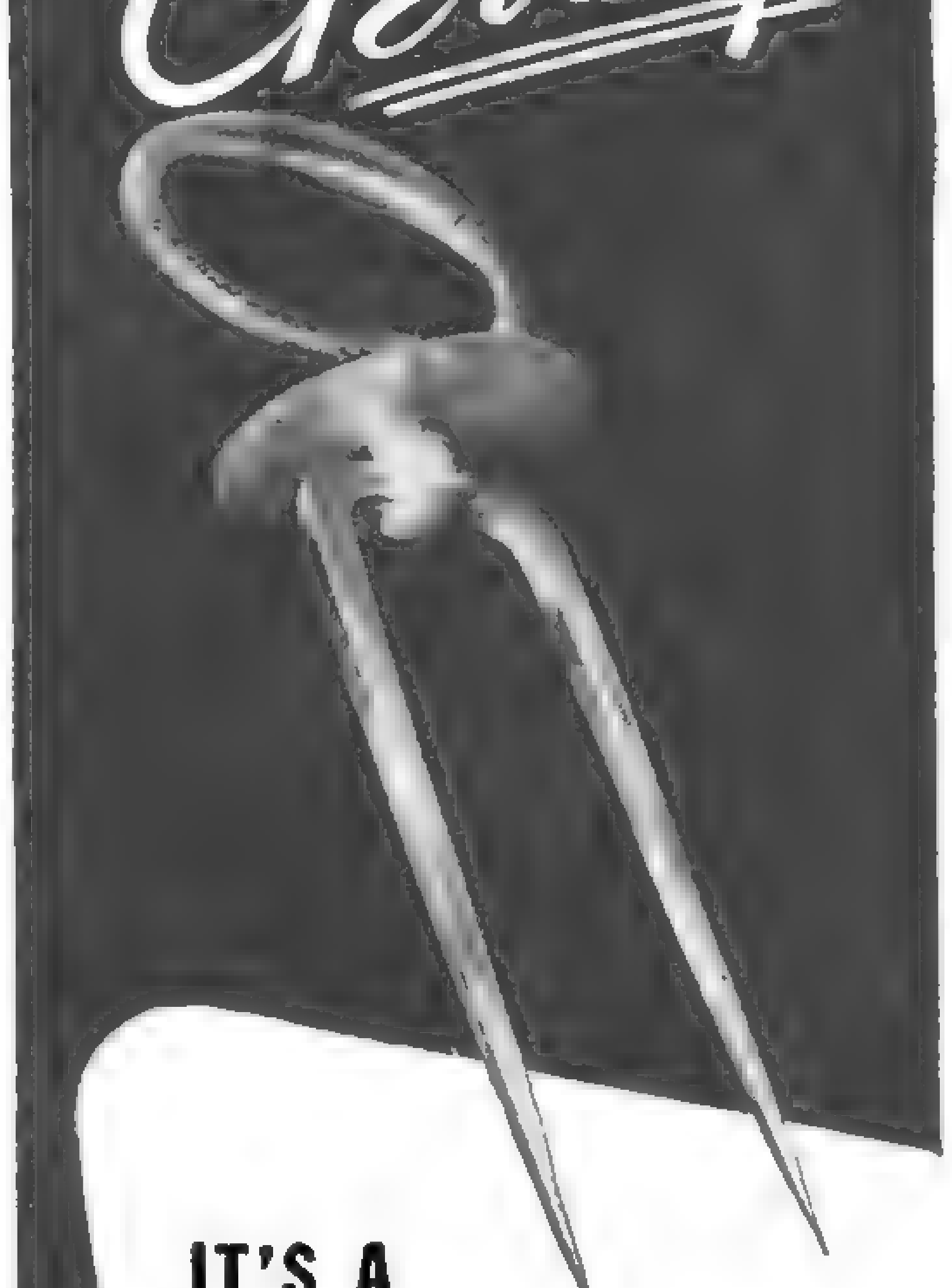
by Gerity



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...FINE SILVERPLATE

Delightful gift! The Gerity Carving Aid for gracious serving of fowl, roasts, ham. In perfect taste for Christmas, business associates. At leading jewelers and gift departments. Price $10.
Gerity-Michigan Die Casting Co.,
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Brodi

RELAX WITH THE YEAR'S MOST FASCINATING GAME

The miniature "slot machine" that can be played anywhere by any number of players with or without banker. Strike levers and watch the wheels spin. Score cards and instructions included.

DELUXE No. 250 100 interlocking Blue, White and Red Chips—IVORY BRODI, packed in a Suede Case. $2.50

PERFECT HOLIDAY GIFT

No. 150

BRODI with 50 Chips, packed in a Leatherette Box $1.50

No. 100 BRODI alone . . $1.00

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THE FINEST TOY, NOVELTY AND DEPARMENT STORES CARRY BRODI

FROM THE
PAGES OF HISTORY

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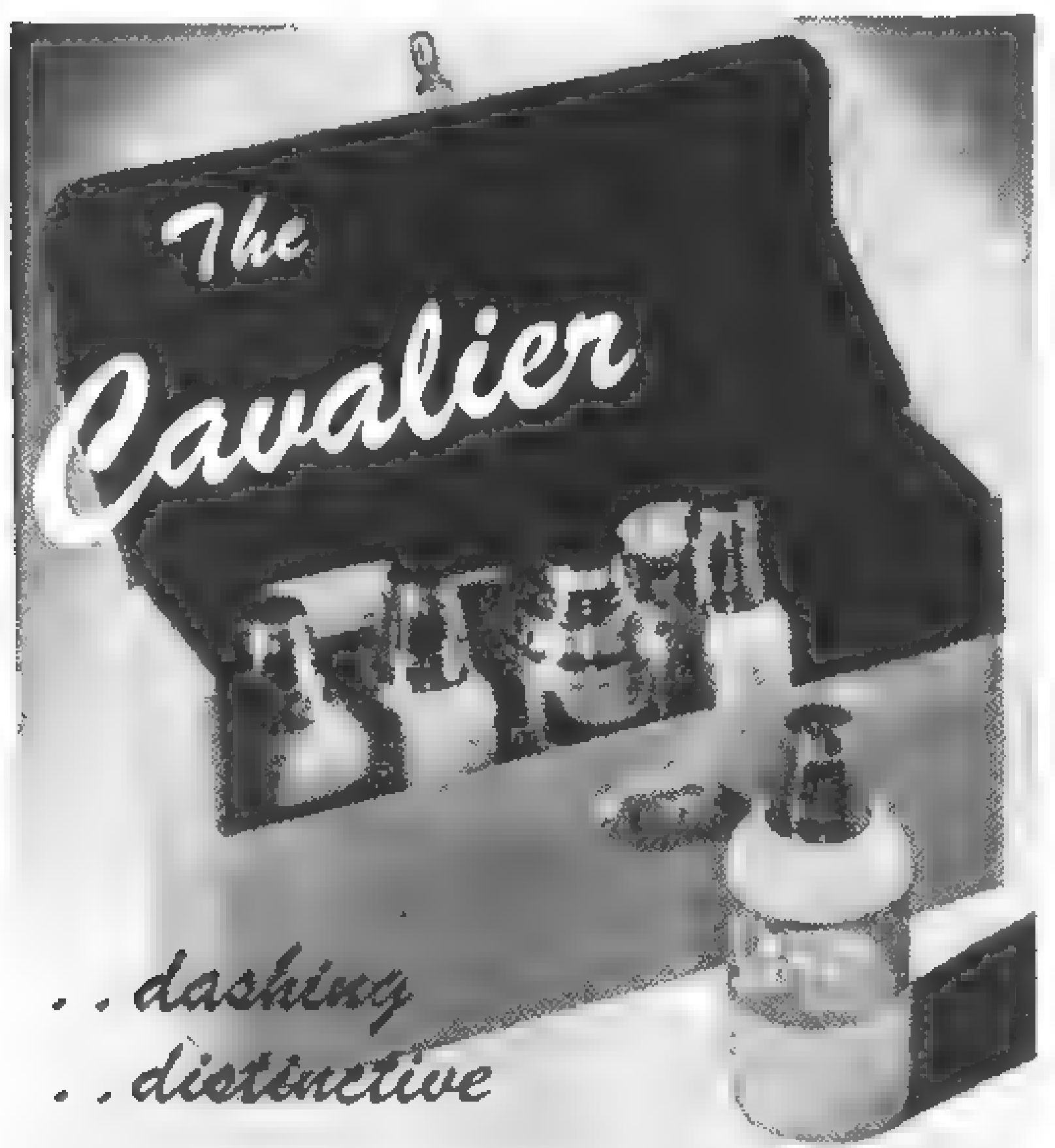
by LUSTERN

A Christmas gift to bewitch and beguile the most modern lovely! Can be worn with or without the two-tone, jeweled centerpiece! Available in yellow or white 1/20 12 kt. gold filled mesh. With matching earrings . . . $38.50 (tax included).

At better jewelry stores everywhere

LOUIS STERN COMPANY
PROVIDENCE RHODE ISLAND



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For Smartness—a hand-sewed California tanned top-grain cowhide case. For Sparkle—frosted flasks and precision spun jiggers and shaker. For Richness—24-karat gold lined interiors. Truly the exciting gift. FOR HIM—for home—for office—for travel—Different, FOR HER. And at $39.85.

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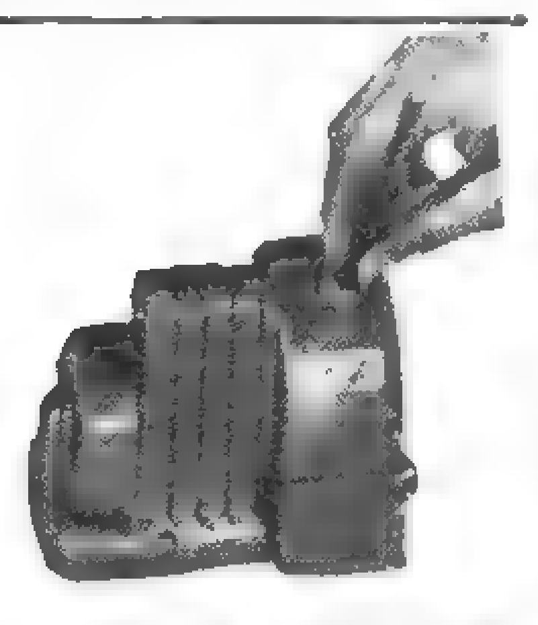

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a Point
to keep
him happy,
his secretary
busy

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the Electric Pencil Sharpener that saves time and money. Indispensable for any office. Automatically starts with insertion of pencil—sharpens to a keen, strong point in less than 2 seconds. In brown or silver gray hammer-tone. The year's outstanding gift. $18 postage prepaid

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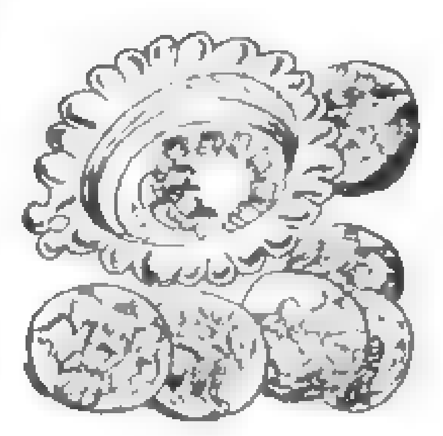
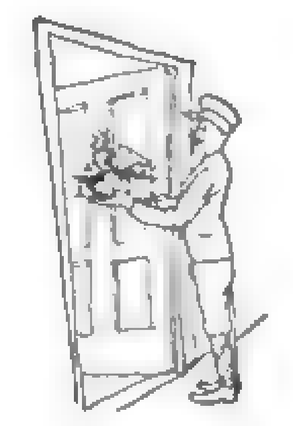
Silver gray ☐ Brown ☐ Check or money order enclosed.
Name ____
Address ____
City ____ State ____
(No C.O. D.'s Please)

Talking Shop with Esquire

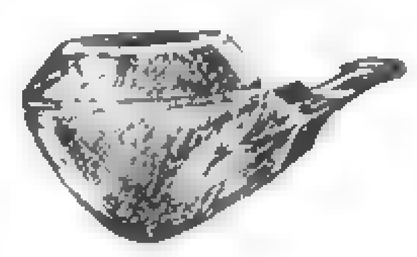
FOR BABY. Tots who won't eat their spinach should have the "story glass" feeding bowl, a brand new device to lure kids to eat down to the bottom of the dish. The glass feeding bowl is equipped with a couple of clips on the outside bottom into which slip colored Mother Goose pictures . . . a different picture for each meal to keep the child's interest up. Sounds like a natural, to us.



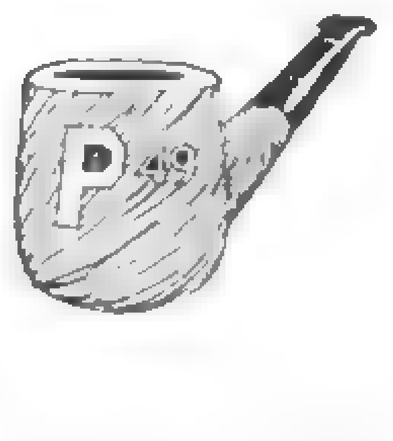
SWEET OF THE MONTH CLUB. Better put your secretary, wife, mother-in-law, Junior at college and everybody down for this gift. "Out of this world" candies, in one or 2-lb. boxes, arrive every month as your token of esteem and regard. In February, chocolate covered cherries filled with rum (Washington's birthday cherries, get it?) another specialty . . . wafer-thin peppermints coated with luscious rich cholocate; and a nut assortment with nuts which actually seem to stay fresh and crunchy. You can buy 3, 6 or 12 month memberships.



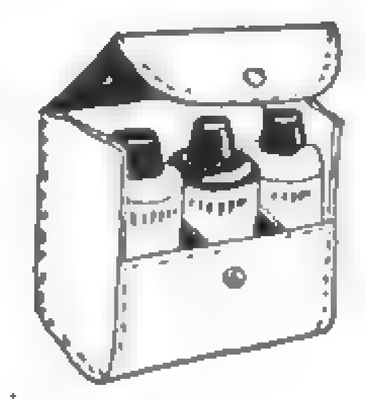
PRECISION FASHIONED . . . that's the blue seal pipe for sportsmen. Made of imported briar, finished in rich walnut. Pipes are carefully bored and reamed to unusually close tolerances so that the cool sweet-smoking qualities are literally "built in".



MONOGRAMMED PIPES. A personalized pipe is a real pal. You can have a chap's monogram, fraternity crest, university, college letter and year put on in sterling silver block letters inlaid on the fine, hand-rubbed imported briar bowl. Pipes themselves have a special long aluminum filter to keep smoke cool and clean; mouthpiece nicely turned for mouth comfort.

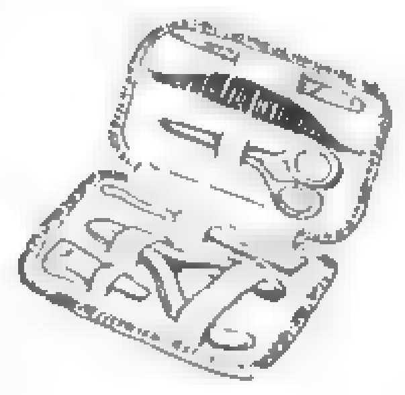


PIGSKIN TRAVEL KIT. Well-known leather goods firm puts out a slick toiletry kit of fine English pigskin, handsomely saddle stitched. Kit contains excellent shaving essentials . . . a bottle of after-shave cream, a soothing non-greasy, quick drying liquid cream emollient intended to allay after-shave irritation, or as a preventative against chapping or windburn; after-shave lotion and a fresh, invigorating, non-sweet cologne. Same firm also does a gift ensemble for traveling containing flesh colored talc, shaving stick in handy travel-type container and an after-shave lotion.

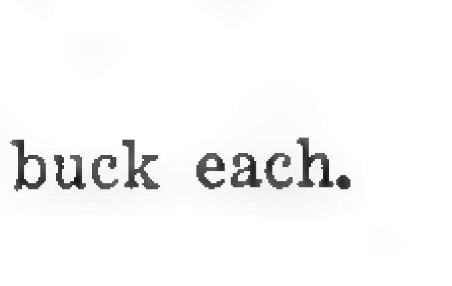


LET'S GO TO THE RACES. Get the gang together and play the new horse racing game based on actual horse racing at the track. Consists of a game board with an odds board at lower end; a deck of special playing cards, miniature horses, playing money, mutuel tickets and instructions. Game can be played four different ways; you can play "odds", determined before the betting begins; "player's pool", no odds, but bets pooled and split among winners; "odds blind" or "jockey's choice".

TRAVEL MANICURE SET containing nail nippers, nail clip, blackhead extractor, nail file, utility scissors and comb all in a neat brown leather case with all-around zipper fastening for speed and dispatch.



FOR BOYS AND GIRLS . . . Sterling silver rings with Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck or Pluto figures wrought in silver. Kids are crazy about them and can own the whole series, as the rings only cost around a buck each.



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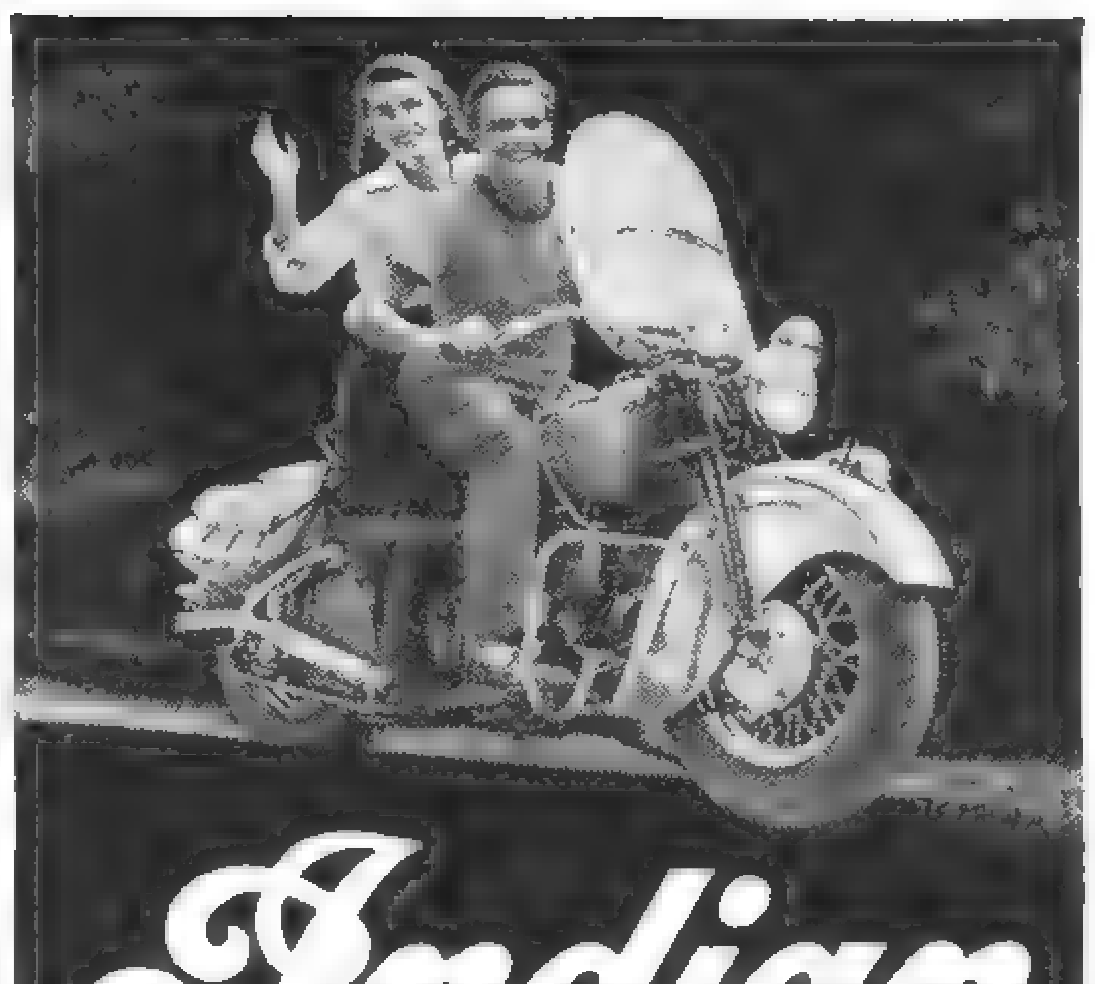

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a MAN'S CONCAVE 18½" PLASTIC HANGER.
Shaped and styled for suits, coats, leisure jackets, Practical, Unbreakable, Special concave construction. "Shaped like a man's shoulders" Wide full trouser bar prevents creasing. Revolving chrome plated hook.
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INVENTORS

The question as to whether a subject matter is patentable can be substantially determined by a search of the U. S. Patent records. Without obligation, write us for full information on what steps an inventor should take to secure a Patent or Trademark.

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Soothing, after shave. Peppy rub-down . . . effective deodorant.

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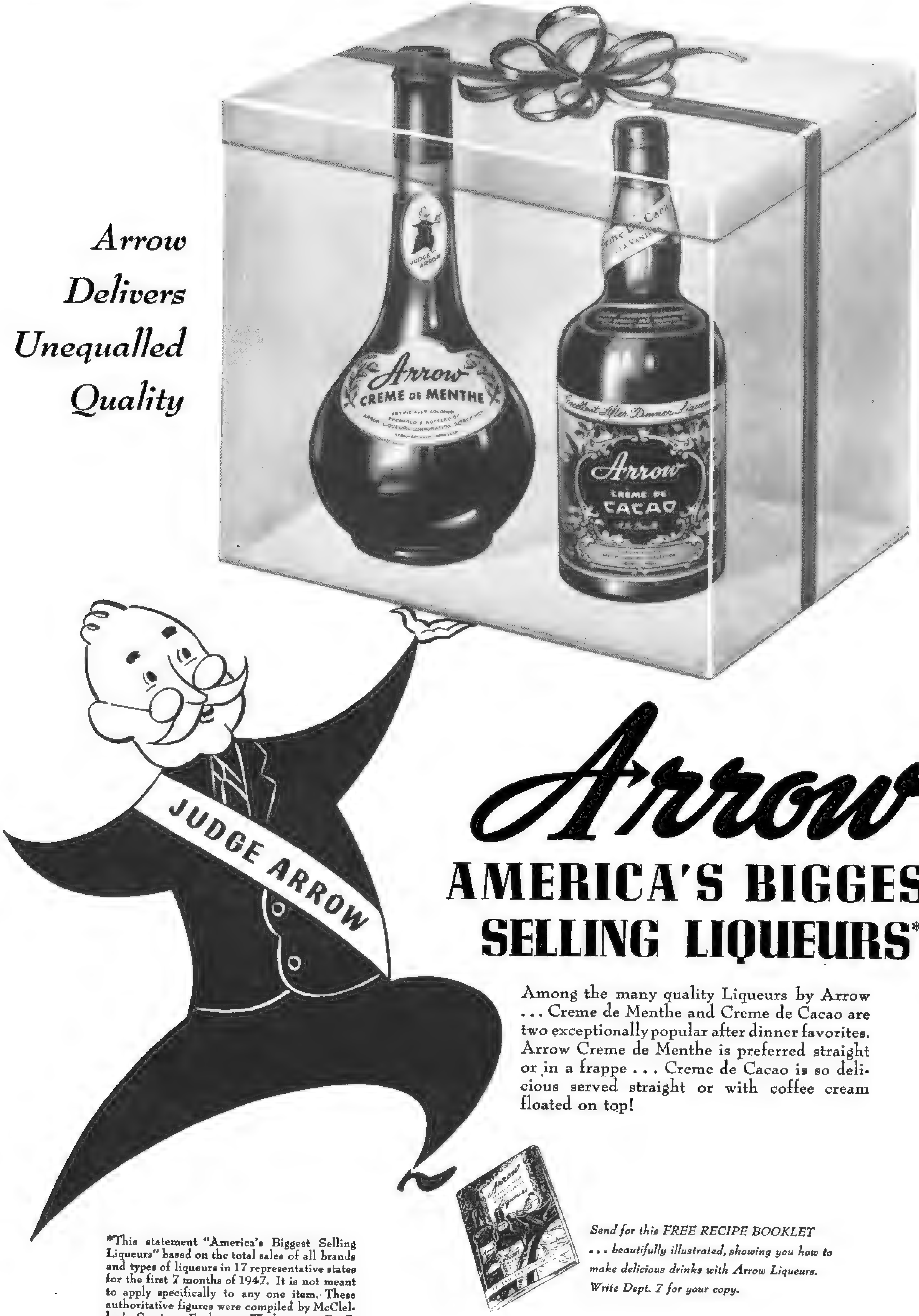
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Among the many quality Liqueurs by Arrow . . . Creme de Menthe and Creme de Cacao are two exceptionally popular after dinner favorites. Arrow Creme de Menthe is preferred straight or in a frappe . . . Creme de Cacao is so delicious served straight or with coffee cream floated on top!

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Send for this FREE RECIPE BOOKLET . . . beautifully illustrated, showing you how to make delicious drinks with Arrow Liqueurs. Write Dept. 7 for your copy.

ARROW LIQUEURS CORP., DETROIT 7, MICHIGAN

*This statement "America's Biggest Selling Liqueurs" based on the total sales of all brands and types of liqueurs in 17 representative states for the first 7 months of 1947. It is not meant to apply specifically to any one item. These authoritative figures were compiled by McClellan's Services Exchange, Washington, D. C. Arrow Creme de Menthe, 60 proof; Creme de Cacao, 60 proof.

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NORTHLANDS

The thrill of flying snow . . . the mastery of ski control are yours on Northlands. For Northland ski craftsmanship and design give you the perfect means to find and enjoy the best in skiing.

15c brings you Northland's Ski Manual. Tips by experts on skis and skiing. Or write for free booklet. Offer does not apply in Canada.

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World's Largest Ski Manufacturers
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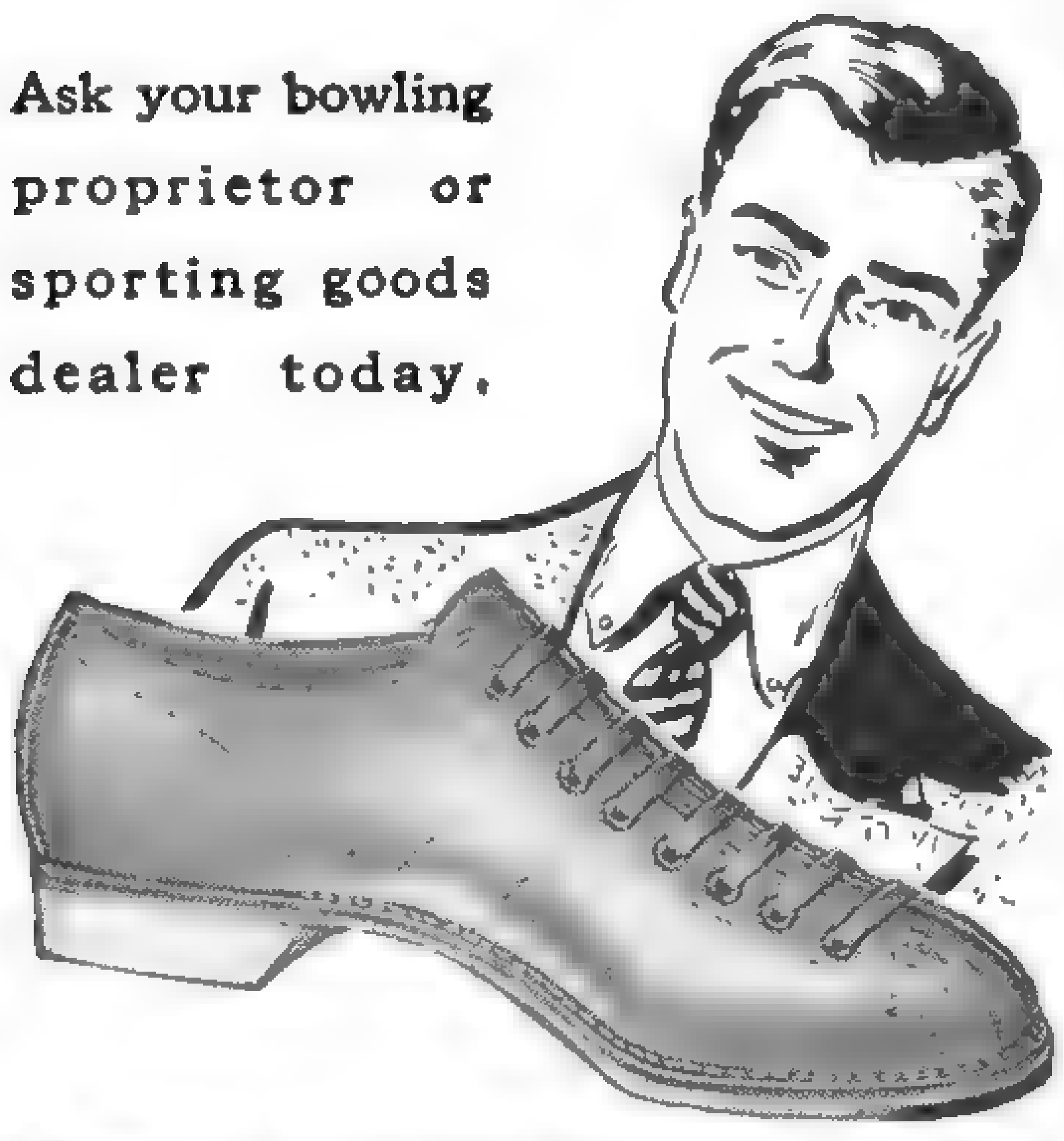
HAPPY HOLIDAYS AHEAD

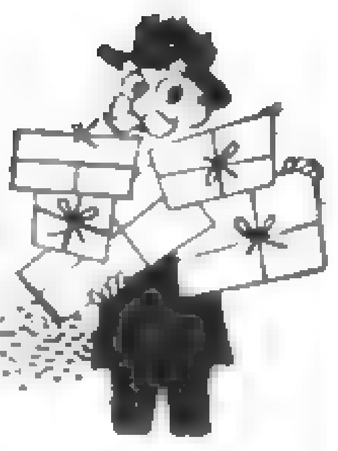
. . . for the lucky man who's gifted with a pair of these indispensable *Hyde-crafted* bowling shoes . . . . They'll do wonders for his game, besides giving him extra hours of comfortable pin-busting, thanks to *Hyde's* exclusive arch-supporting features. . . . For right or left handed bowlers, in smoke, brown, black, or white.

Ask your bowling proprietor or sporting goods dealer today.

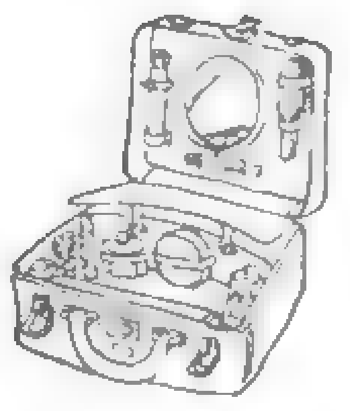


HYDE
ATHLETIC SHOE CO.
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

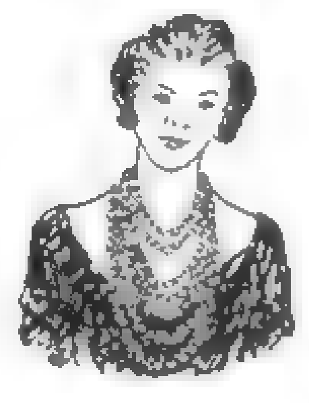
Talking Shop with Esquire



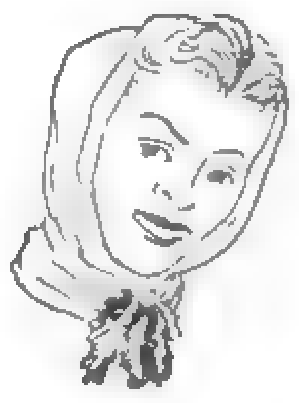
FITTED OVERNIGHT CASE. Gals love handsome leather cases that come completely trapped out with rows of bottles and jars for beautifying. This one is particularly choice . . . case in sturdy, Oriental water Buffalo leather; large mirror in inside cover and special compartments for costume jewelry, hosiery and cleansing tissues. And best of all, gold topped toilet bottles, brush and comb of lucite, scissors, manicure requisites. Come across with this one, and brother, you're in!



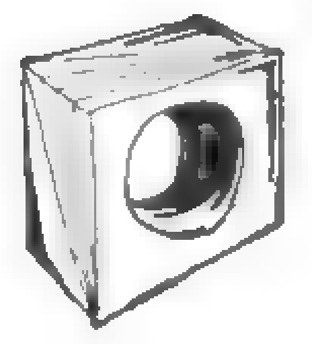
PORTRAIT IN PEARLS. Height of smartness, a 14 strand necklace of simulated pearls clasped with rhinestones. Or a double strand of pearls with jewel studded gold leaf and pearl tassel; long tassel earrings to match.



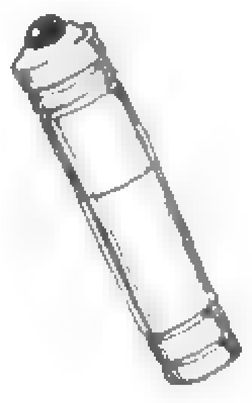
FOR HER ALONE, a pure silk scarf with her name or initials hand painted thereon in contrasting colors. Pale blue for blondes, chartreuse for red heads and so it goes. Or a pure silk chiffon scarf trimmed with a fringe of mink tails . . . a honey of a gift for a gal who insists upon mink. And how about a persian lamb helmet with persian muff pocketbook to match?



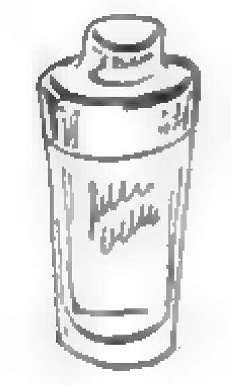
THE BOLT RING. Chaps who go in for extraordinary jewelry will cotton to a heavy sterling silver ring shaped exactly like a bolt, round center and *square* periphery. A hunk of silver, ¾" wide with sunray etching on the sides. So heavy it's better than brass knuckles. Another chap in New York's Greenwich Village, makes weirdies in men's jewelry. Amoeba-like cufflinks set with garnets; strange, angular cufflinks and tie clasps . . . all in heavy sterling silver with a strange, interesting fascination.



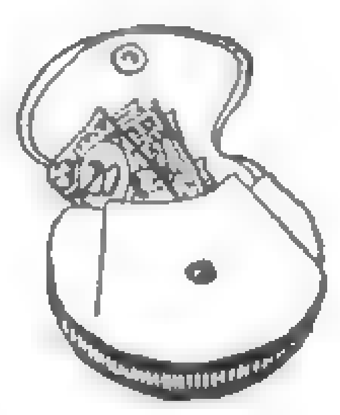
LADIES LOVE ATOMIZERS. Charming little gift, a purse size, gold plated atomizer with a colorful jewelled top. When cap is removed, a soft, misty spray emerges as a result of its feather-touch action. The little golden cantiner is leak-proof and air-tight.



GIFTS FOR A SIREN. Number one on her list is usually perfume, preferably with a femme fatale scent. Don't overlook a newcomer called "Five-O' Clock", a spirited, sparkling fragrance in a unique crystal bottle shaped like a ½ oz. cocktail shaker, even to the gold plated, cocktail shaker top. It's a beauty. Another "come-on" scent: "Tigress", exotic as the jungle. And another brand new arrival from Paris called, significantly, "Passion" . . . "the scent which dares to be different." And what's new with *you*, bud?



MILADY'S MAKE-UP. The latest movie queen technique for painting the lips, is via a paint *brush.* That being the case, better look into a metal cased lipstick which also holds a tiny brush for application. Just slide off the cover and out pops a fine lip brush. Another new version of the lip brush is called a fountain lipstick brush. She puts her own lipstick into a metal case and by twisting the end of the case, the lipstick is forced up through the brush, pretty as you please. Other end of the container, holds perfume. A Hollywood importation. Also from there, a combination change purse and compact in leather. Zipper around edges. For her handbag, an exact replica of a walnut, gold plated and set with fake jewels. Opens up and reveals a miniature sewing kit, pins, thread, needles, all ready for an emergency repair job. Keep in her handbag.



Ranger

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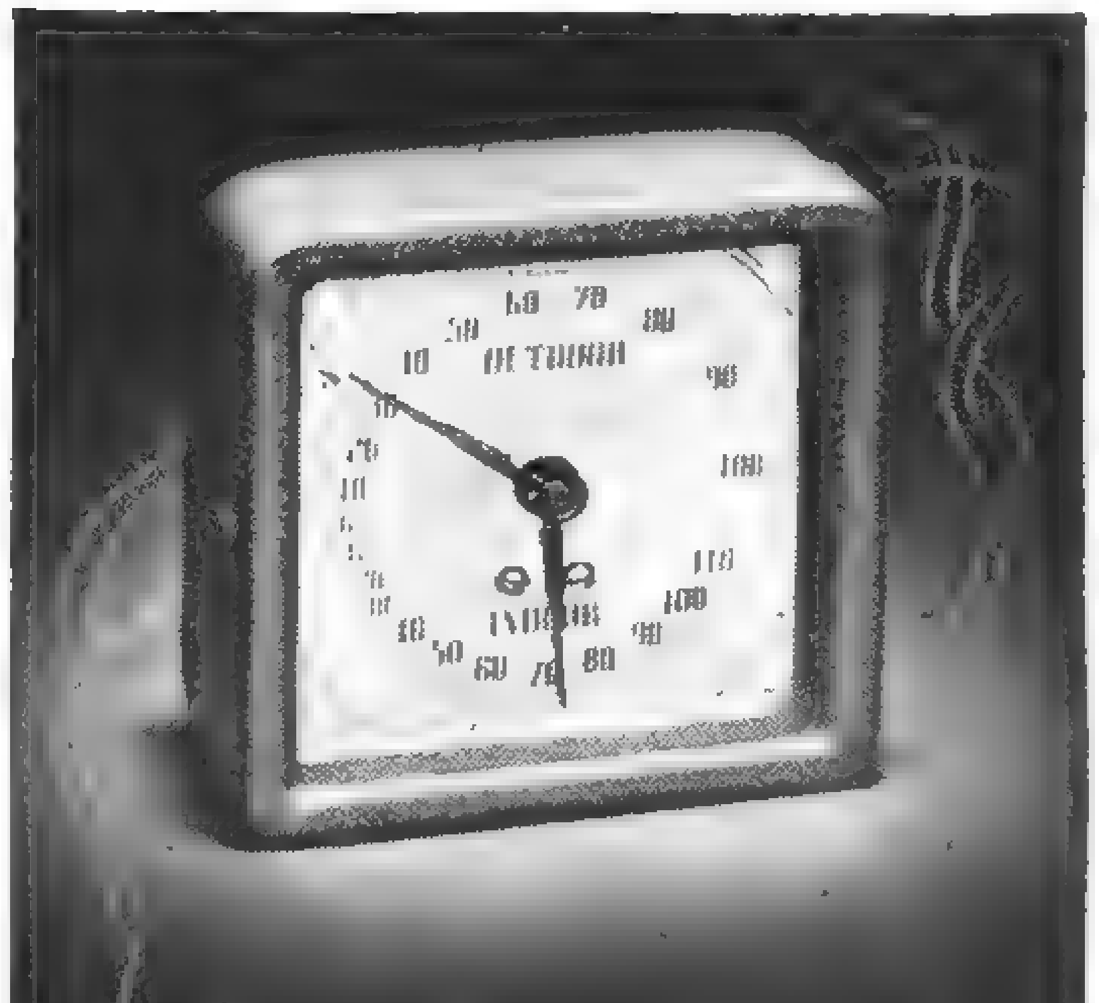

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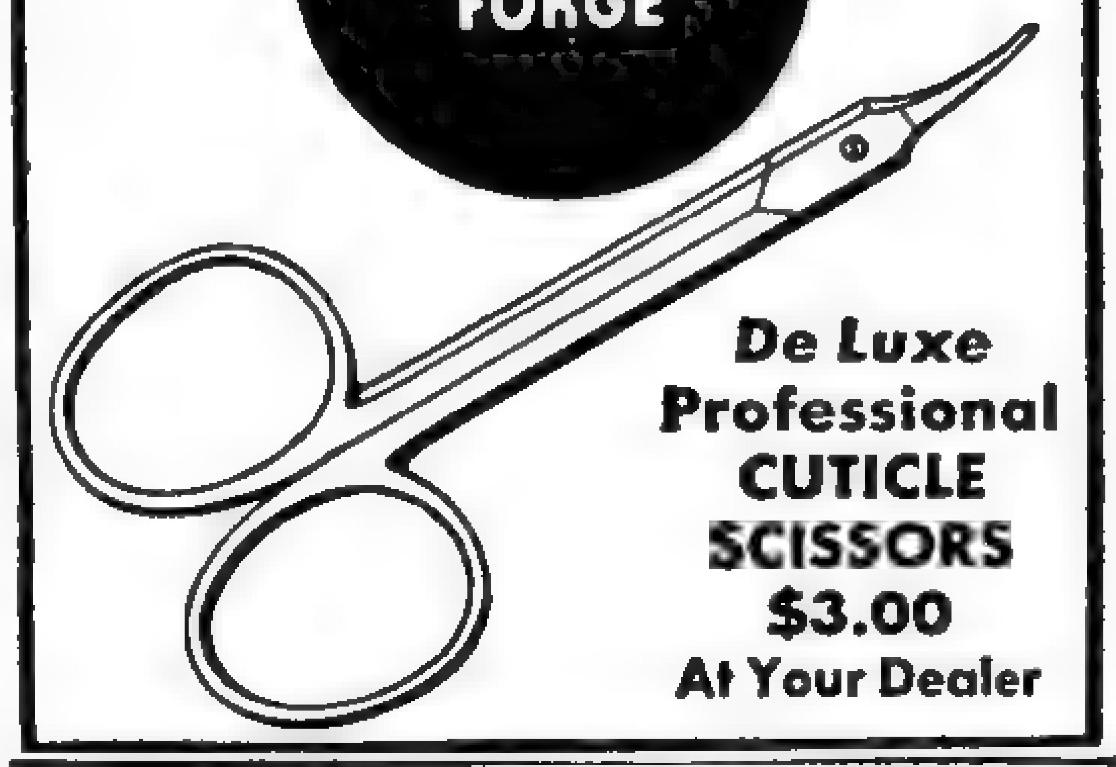

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$3.00
At Your Dealer

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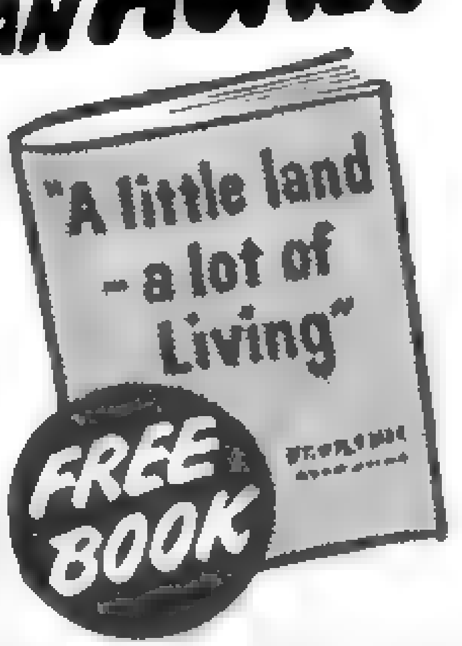

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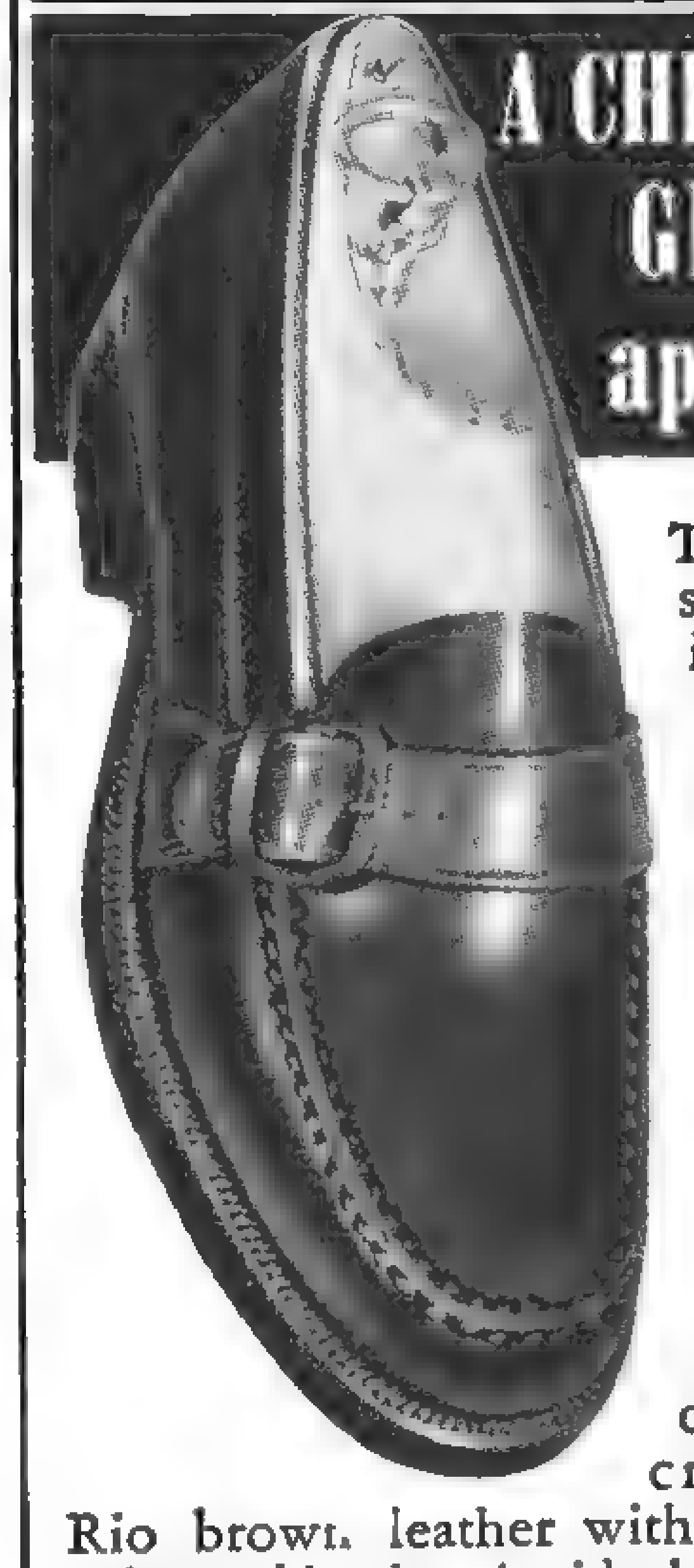
MY WIFE and I would like to send you our FREE BOOK about our "HAVE-MORE" PLAN for "a little land—a lot of living." Tells how to do wonders with a garden, fruits, berries, poultry, livestock, etc.—all on small scale—in spare time. Many new devices, scientific methods. Special house plans and layouts for small acreages. It's a whole wonderful NEW SCIENCE of living—a healthier, happier, more independent life—on the little place you've always dreamed of having. Just drop us a post card today for our FREE BOOK—32 pages—50 illustrations. Ed Robinson, Box 4701 Noroton, Conn.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT men appreciate



There's thrilling style and luxurious comfort in these all-purpose Concord casual shoes—truly smart informal footwear. Striking "buckle-and-strap" moccasin pattern with bold hand sewn vamp and unique rolled collar. Expertly crafted in rich Rio brown leather with sturdy leather soles and heels. An ideal Christmas Gift!

ORDER BY MAIL—Immediate Delivery

Quality insured by 45 years of fine shoemaking. Order Model E22 today. State exact shoe size and width. Available NOW in sizes 6 to 12, B, C, D, $8.95. Add 25c for mailing. Satisfaction or your money back.

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Languid splendour set to fragrance

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Blended Whiskey. 86.8 Proof. 65% Grain Neutral Spirits.
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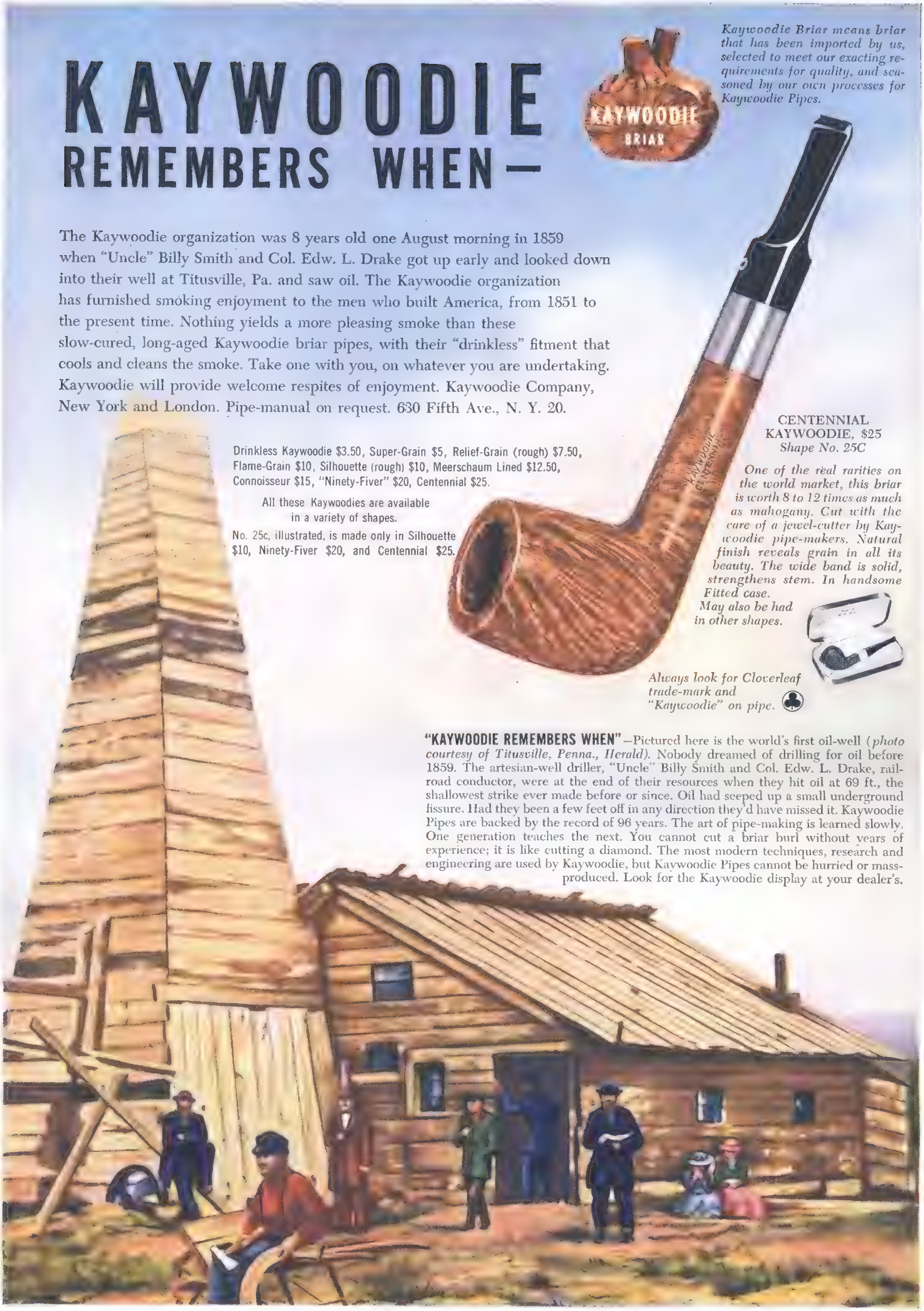
Christmas... give **Seagram's** *and be* **Sure** *of the finest"*



KAYWOODIE REMEMBERS WHEN—

Kaywoodie Briar means briar that has been imported by us, selected to meet our exacting requirements for quality, and seasoned by our own processes for Kaywoodie Pipes.

The Kaywoodie organization was 8 years old one August morning in 1859 when "Uncle" Billy Smith and Col. Edw. L. Drake got up early and looked down into their well at Titusville, Pa. and saw oil. The Kaywoodie organization has furnished smoking enjoyment to the men who built America, from 1851 to the present time. Nothing yields a more pleasing smoke than these slow-cured, long-aged Kaywoodie briar pipes, with their "drinkless" fitment that cools and cleans the smoke. Take one with you, on whatever you are undertaking. Kaywoodie will provide welcome respites of enjoyment. Kaywoodie Company, New York and London. Pipe-manual on request. 630 Fifth Ave., N. Y. 20.

Drinkless Kaywoodie $3.50, Super-Grain $5, Relief-Grain (rough) $7.50, Flame-Grain $10, Silhouette (rough) $10, Meerschaum Lined $12.50, Connoisseur $15, "Ninety-Fiver" $20, Centennial $25.

All these Kaywoodies are available in a variety of shapes.

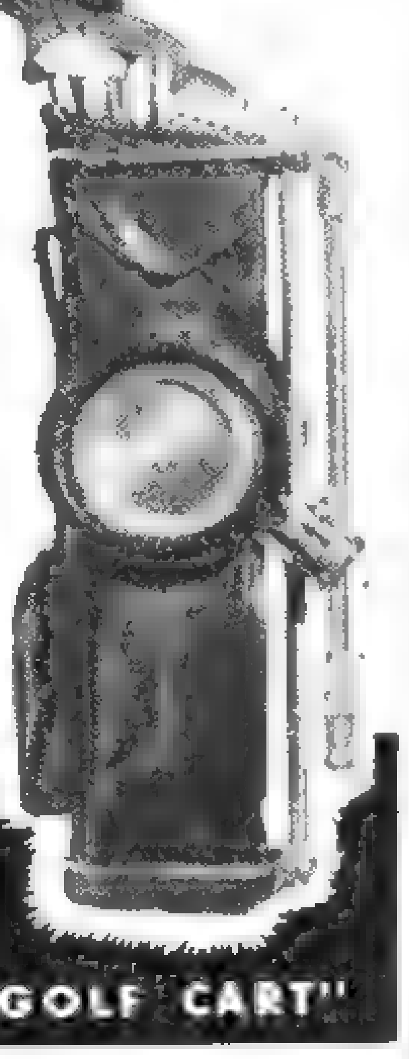
No. 25c, illustrated, is made only in Silhouette $10, Ninety-Fiver $20, and Centennial $25.

CENTENNIAL
KAYWOODIE, $25
Shape No. 25C

One of the real rarities on the world market, this briar is worth 8 to 12 times as much as mahogany. Cut with the care of a jewel-cutter by Kaywoodie pipe-makers. Natural finish reveals grain in all its beauty. The wide band is solid, strengthens stem. In handsome Fitted case. May also be had in other shapes.

Always look for Cloverleaf trade-mark and "Kaywoodie" on pipe. ♣

"KAYWOODIE REMEMBERS WHEN"—Pictured here is the world's first oil-well (*photo courtesy of Titusville, Penna., Herald*). Nobody dreamed of drilling for oil before 1859. The artesian-well driller, "Uncle" Billy Smith and Col. Edw. L. Drake, railroad conductor, were at the end of their resources when they hit oil at 69 ft., the shallowest strike ever made before or since. Oil had seeped up a small underground fissure. Had they been a few feet off in any direction they'd have missed it. Kaywoodie Pipes are backed by the record of 96 years. The art of pipe-making is learned slowly. One generation teaches the next. You cannot cut a briar burl without years of experience; it is like cutting a diamond. The most modern techniques, research and engineering are used by Kaywoodie, but Kaywoodie Pipes cannot be hurried or mass-produced. Look for the Kaywoodie display at your dealer's.



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CLEAN IT
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FOR A COOL, CLEAN, SMOKE

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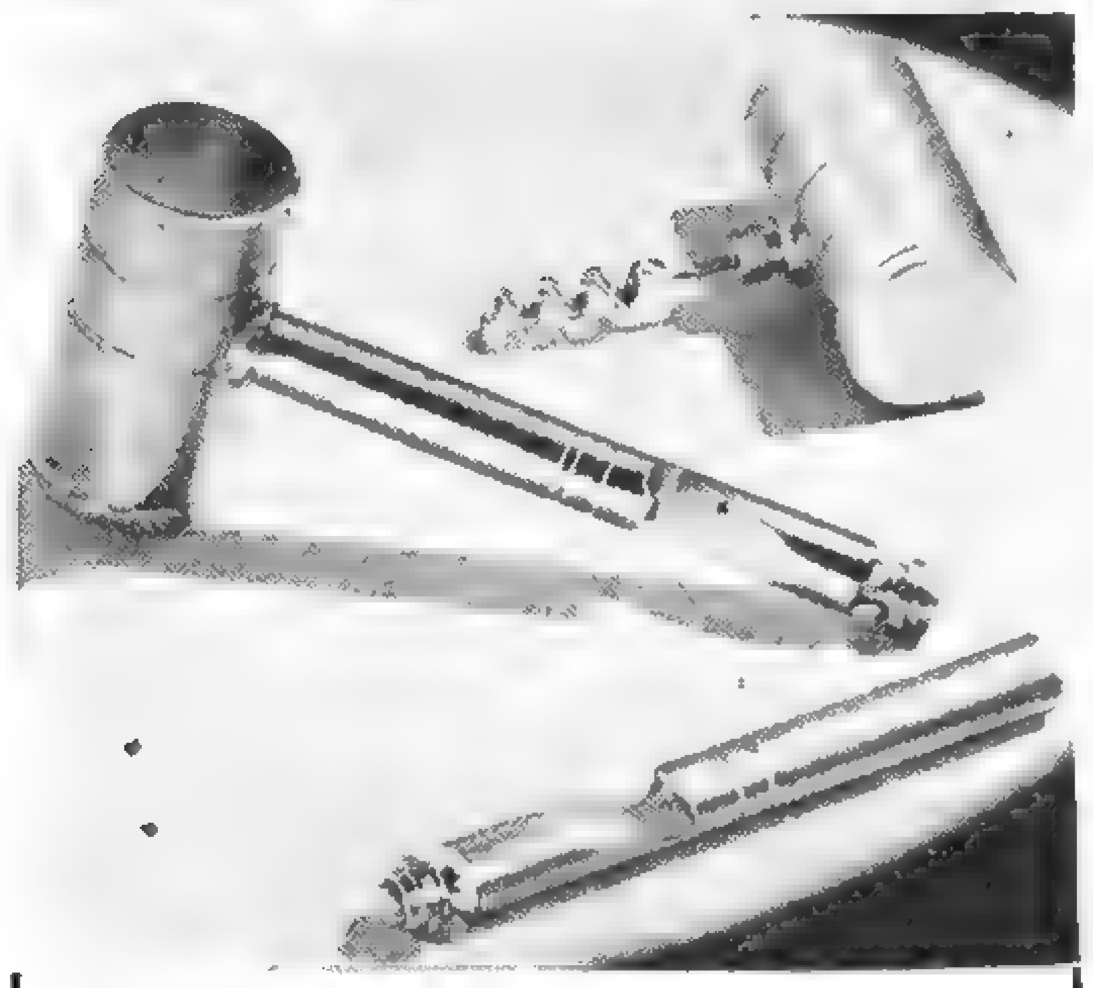
DENNY'S piper



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It's the amateur home-bartender's delight! Made of richly chrome-plated, solid brass... a combination Ice Hammer, Bottle Opener, Stirrer, Corkscrew, 1 and 2 oz. jigger. An ideal Xmas Gift! $1.49 Postpaid No C.O.D.'s please

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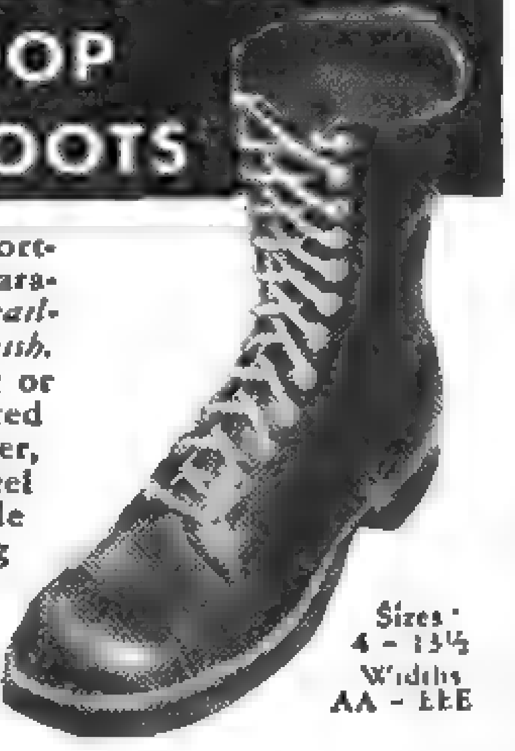

For Outdoor Men
PARATROOP HUNTING BOOTS

Here are the famous rugged, comfortable, foot-protecting boots that Paratroopers wore in the war... *now available in heavy-oiled waterproof elk finish.* Ideal for hunting, fishing, hiking or outside work... 10″ height; balanced construction; leather counter, filler, middlesole and hard box toe; steel shank; reinforcing instep tapes, wide toe and narrow heel; long wearing rubber outer tap and non-trip heel.

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PRICE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
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Sizes: 4 - 13½ Widths AA - EEE

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Send a pair of Paratroop Hunting Boots. Check Money Order for $10.87 is enclosed. I will pay postage C.O.D. E-12

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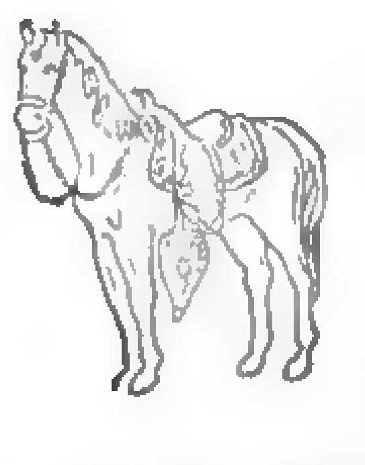
Regular shoe size & width______

Talking Shop with Esquire

TIPPED TIP. Here's a gift that will have your cigar smoking friends puffing forth praises for your originality. A box of 25 quality cigars, each one individually tipped in a smart, sanitary manner. The holders assure a cool smoke for fastidious gentlemen.

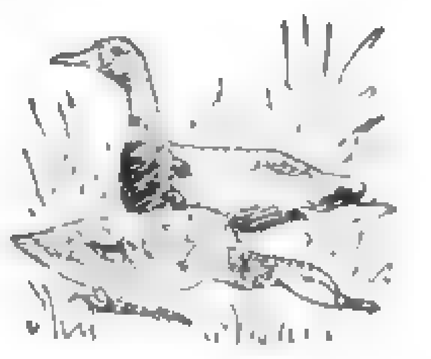
GIVE A HORSE FOR CHRISTMAS . . . a bronze horse, hand wrought in miniature. A Western stallion with flexible chain bridle, detachable Mexican saddle and separate blanket; an authentic English thoroughbred hunter with rider . . . both in gleaming bronze plate. Weighs about 10 lbs. Smart for game rooms, libraries, etc.



FOR SPORTS OR GIRLIE SHOW FANS. Make your balcony or bleacher perchers happy with a pair of moderately priced binoculars. They come complete with coated lenses like the fine military glasses (coated lenses reduce reflections and ghost images) and have adjustable eyepieces to fit the distance between your own two eyes. Glasses are 3.5 power with 45 mm lenses.

PATTERNED FOR THE POCKET. Kids and grownups will get a lot of fun out of a pair of two buck binos. They measure only 2⅝″ closed and weigh under 4 oz. Frames are made of unbreakable bakelite.

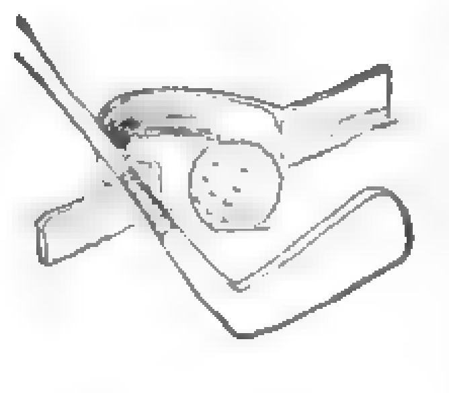
GAME BIRD SHADOW BOXES. A woman bird artist makes individual shadow boxes (10″x7x3) containing ducks, geese, pheasant, quail, grouse, woodcock and several species of shore birds. These perfect little miniatures are painstakingly made of feathers, absolutely accurate in color and shape. The birds stand in relief against painted backgrounds in the box which give the idea of the usual habitat of the birds, even to the touch of real grass, brush, etc. A magnificent ornament for the wall or to stand on a shelf, desk or table. Not cheap, but worth every dollar.



BINGO! Boresome evenings can be enlivened with a little spirited betting via the chute bingo game. There's a heavy wire cage, 9″ in diameter, heavily rubberized. Under the cage, a mahogany finished felt lined chute where the balls roll out. Set comes with 75 maple balls, 50 heavyweight bingo cards, 50 transparent markers and a master board. A riot of fun and an appreciated gift.

GOLFER'S FRIEND. Golfers love gimmicks . . . and here's a real one. A retriever of metal, to fish balls out of water traps, marsh, mud or what have you. The rod is only 3 feet when closed, but extends to 6 feet if you need the distance to permit you to fish balls 9 or 10 feet from shore of water hazards. There's a wire basket device at one end to facilitate scooping.

RUG PUTTERS. More gadgets for indoor practice. This one is a solid steel 2-lb. bar that simulates a golf cup. The hole or cup is 4 inches wide, official width, with two side extensions jaunting out to stop the ball from running under tables, chairs or people's feet.



HOBBY FOR HOBBY-ISTS. Honey of a tool kit . . . pocket size. The jackknife serves cleverly as an interchangeable handle for each tool as needed. A hook at the end of each tool snaps securely into the jackknife. There are 8 tools, hammer, combo can opener and cap lifter, awl, chisel, screw driver, flat file, etc. All made of polished steel, compactly fitted into a sturdy, single fold top grained saddle cowhide case.

Ranger

For answers to all queries, send self-addressed stamped envelope to Ranger, Esquire, 366 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

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HAND-WOVEN
WOOLLENS

by GLENBARR

Soft, colorful woollens with a distinctive appearance. Request samples and satisfy yourself that our woollens excel in quality and value.

■ ONLY $7.00 per 56″ wide yard (money back if not satisfied) BECAUSE we sell directly to you from our mill.

REQUIRED MATERIAL
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Please send me free swatches. I prefer plaid, plain, striped, herringbone (circle one)
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Amazing tricks, mystifying and spooky stage and party illusions. Easy to do—no skill—perfect instructions. Fool your friends. Loads of fun. Add "life" to any party. 350 pages. 600 illustrations. Mail $1.00 for catalog, credited on your first order for $5.00 or more.

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DOWN-DRAFT CHIMNEY ACTION
★ Windproof
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If your dealer is unable to supply you send $3.50 direct

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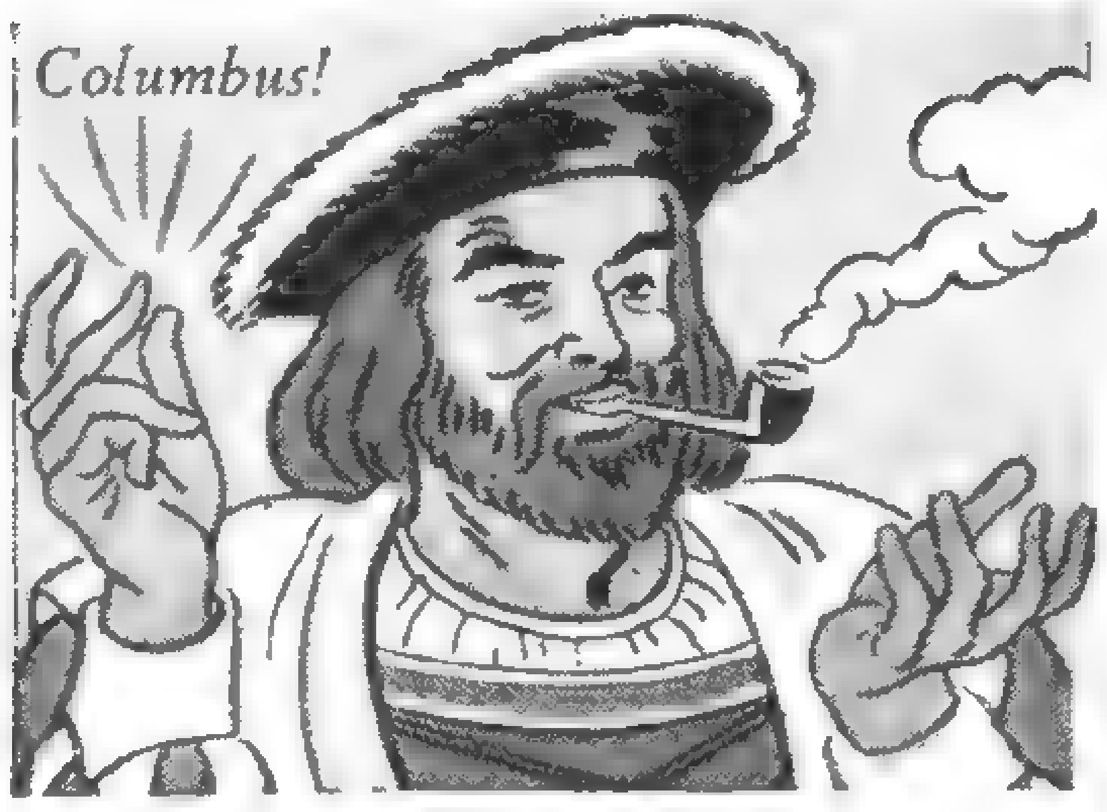
SIX HOURS of pipe-smoking Heaven—for only 25¢

That's putting it MILDLY!



I discovered a new world! So what? For Philip Morris discovered a new world of smoking coolness in—

Country Doctor Pipe Mixture

It's the monarch of world's rarest, and most fragrant tobaccos

If your dealer doesn't have it—write Philip Morris & Co., Dept. F24, 119 Fifth Avenue, New York

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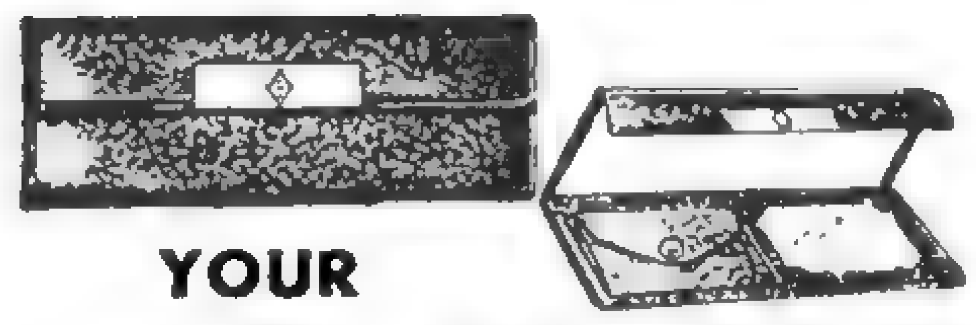

YOUR FRATERNITY CREST ON THE SKYMASTER BILLFOLD

Black Morocco goat with signature plate mounted with your own or your daughter's sorority crest.

No. 525-E . . . **$6.50**
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The very *instant* you step into a pair of **"ELEVATORS"** you are **TALLER**. Yes, the height you've always dreamed about is yours the minute you put on a pair of these amazing Height-Increasing Shoes. *Instantly* you rise in everybody's estimation. *Instantly* you tower over people. *Instantly* you make your TALLEST wish come true.

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TRADE MARK
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*TRADE MARK OF STONE-TARLOW CO., INC.

Styles for Dress, Street, Sportswear.

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Please send me Free Booklet and name of nearest dealer.

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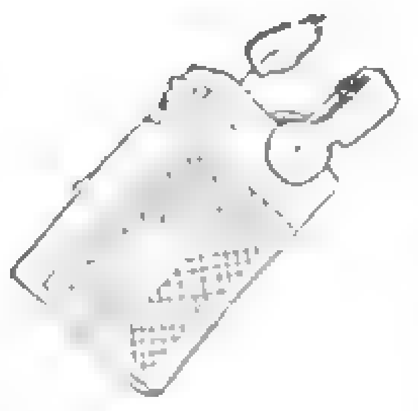
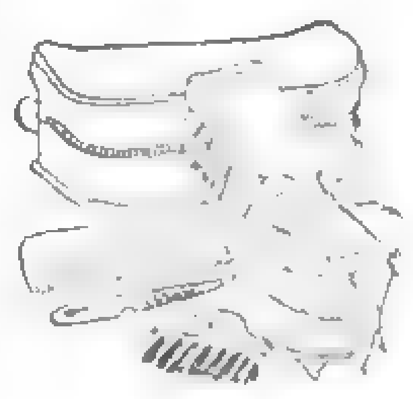
The Original and Genuine "ELEVATORS"
Manufactured Exclusively by Stone-Tarlow Co., Inc.

Talking Shop with Esquire

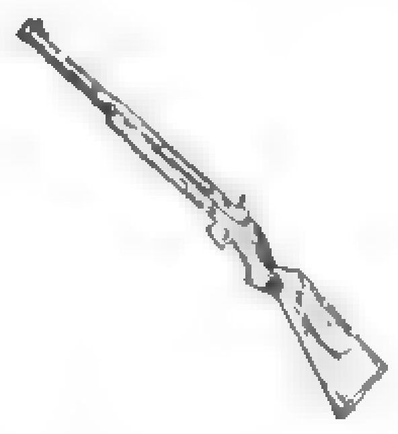
LIKE SNAPPING ON A LIGHT SWITCH. A new cigarette lighter reduces "lighting up" to one simple movement. To light, you push a safety latch. Instantly and automatically, the flame appears. No ungainly motions to operate. A flip of your index finger does the snuffing. Lighter is a cinch to fill, just pull out the bottom of the lighter, no washers, screws or funnels. Platinum rhodium finish, engine turned. Slim and graceful enough design for a lady or gentleman.



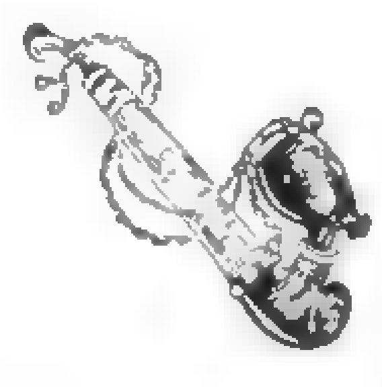
MALE KIT. A locker room or traveler's item; small clothes brush, comb, nail file, sturdy hair brush with chunky handle of mock tortoise shell . . . all housed in a small leather zippered case small enough to fit into a shoe.



PNEUMATIC RIFLE WITH CONTROLLED POWER. Here's a rifle which should make for more accurate shooting by eliminating as many personal error factors as possible. The rifle fills the velocity gap between the "BB" gun and the .22 rifle, making it a swell arm for indoor shooting as well as pest control. The aim-disturbing jump of some spring-actuated pneumatics, isn't present in this one, the makers say. Fast lock-time and high bullet velocity lessen the time between the let-off and bullet emergence, putting the shooter's will and the bullet's delivery in closer relation to one another. Accurate barrel and bullets permit a more uniformly accurate performance, with higher scores the result. The perfect duplication of any previous cycle of charging, loading and firing, permits the shooter to predict or calculate his results before-hand. The easily controlled, yet positive safety, eliminates the mental hazard that frequently has knocked an otherwise good score into a cocked hat. In fact, one or more parts would actually have to be broken before the rifle could fire with the safety on, they assure us. To individualize the arm to the shooter, adjustment has been provided on sights and trigger pull. Every detail from muzzle to butt, is put into the test balance to determine if it will help to produce more accurate shooting.



CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PIPE. Picturesque long stemmed, Central European pipes are back again . . . choice briar bowls, distinctively carved, long, curved stems of smoke-sweetening cherrywood . . . even to the bright metal spark guards. The design of the bit allows the pipe to hang easily from the lips in the manner of a dignified burgomeister.



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Through the ages and from far off lands Cashmere has been shipped all over the world. For the first time in years we can now resume shipment of the ultimate in luxurious full fashioned sweaters.

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Sizes: small, medium, large, extra large
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Time flies—but if your watch has taken a nose dive recently you won't be able to tell what it's doing. Give your watch first aid by putting it in a box and have Uncle Sam's postman speed it to the loving hands of our Swiss Craftsmen. It will come back completely rejuvenated, works, dial, case, all made like new. Send it now. Estimate by return mail. No obligation. Special fast action offer: Beautiful leather strap given free with repairs—for a limited time. Mail your watch today for complete servicing.

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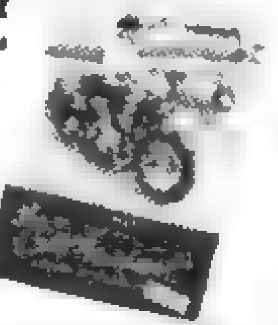

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Send free copy of ENTHUSIAST magazine, filled with motorcycle action pictures and stories; also literature on 1948 models.

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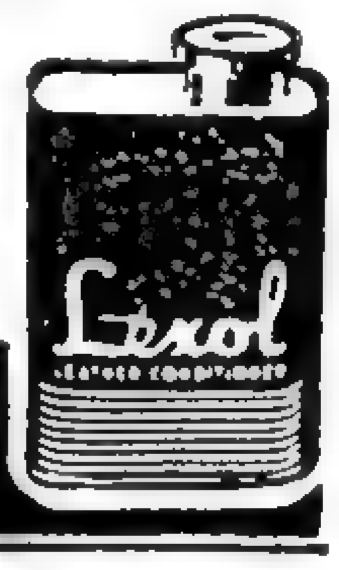
LEATHER CONDITIONER

Prolongs the life and improves the appearance of all genuine leather goods.

LEXOL is sold at shoe, luggage, camera supply, sporting goods and department stores.



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GOOD—by itself
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Pipe Mixture
ORIGINAL BLEND No. 53
The Friendly Mixer
RUM and MAPLE

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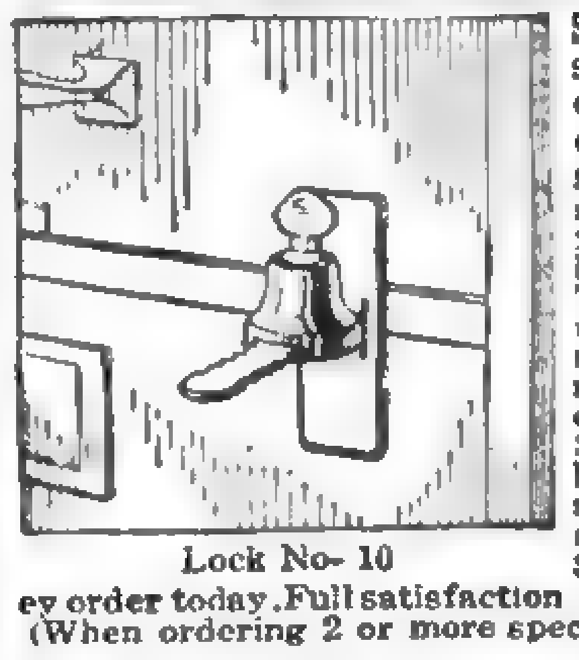

Lock No- 10

Slips on instantly and locks securely. Designed to fit every type of drawer or door. Has 4 adjustable positions. Locks two drawers at one time. Will not scratch furniture or woodwork. Has beautiful rust-proof finish. Theft proof. Thousands in daily use by leading firms, department stores and U. S. Government agencies. Ideal for home, office, factory or hotel use. Splendid for locking work benches or store rooms. (Also made for glass or wood sliding show case doors.) *Priced only $2.50 each.* Send check or money order today. Full satisfaction or money back guaranteed. (When ordering 2 or more specify if keys are wanted alike).

WONDER LOCK 53 W. JACKSON BLVD. CHICAGO 4, ILL.

Journey straight to her heart...with American Touristers

Matching ensembles of the American Touristers illustrated are available in a complete range of sizes.

What feminine heart can resist the gift of dreams — romantic dreams of travel? You'll win her completely with American Touristers, smartest of traveling companions. She'll love their elegance, their custom richness. Exclusive one-piece molded plywood construction provides brute strength where needed, yet is light as a cloud. At smart department stores and luggage shops everywhere.

Write Dept. D for name of nearest dealer and free booklet on proper care of luggage

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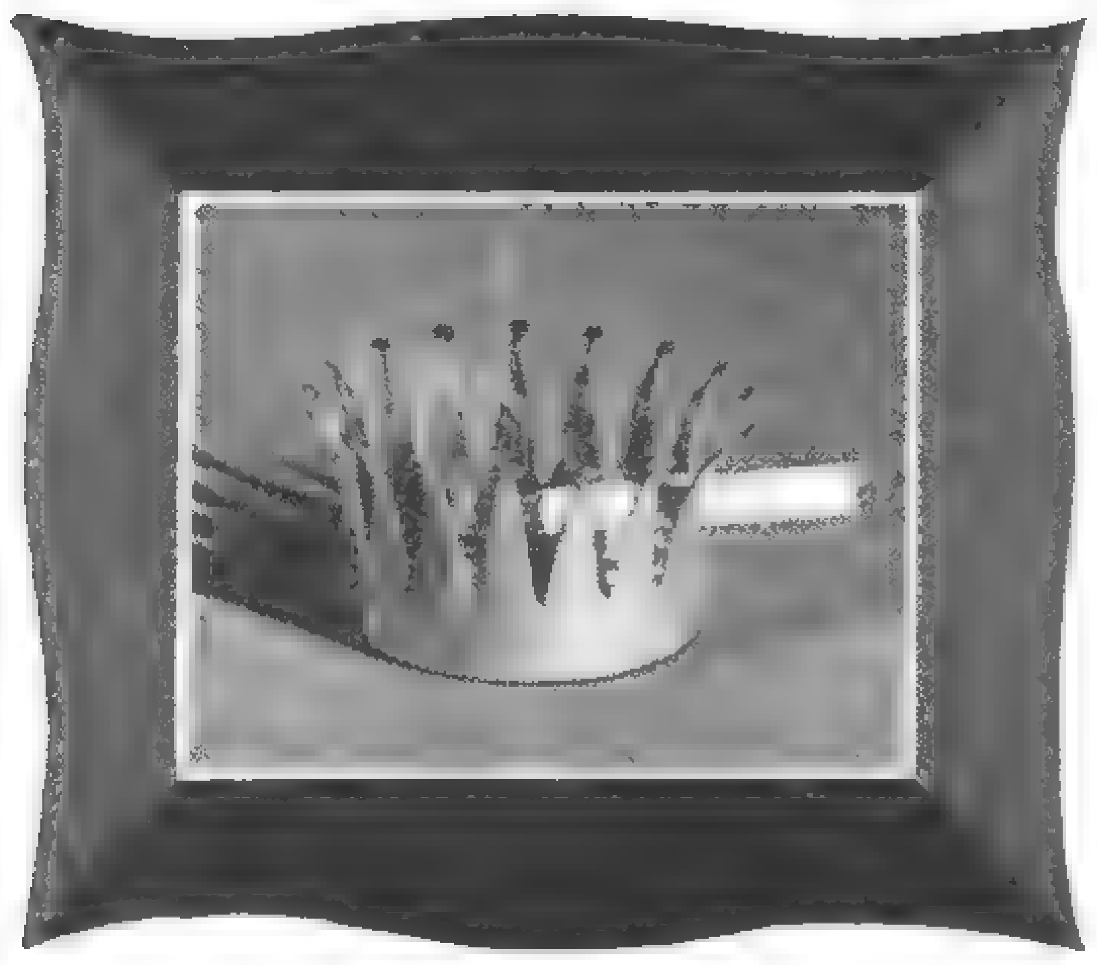
PREVENT FIRES! SAVE LIVES!



A TREASURED
"LIFETIME" GIFT

A real SAFETY ash tray that's *beautiful.* No snuffing -- just "park" cigarette. Can't fall, roll out or burn past slot. Protects furniture, rugs. Solid brass, heavily chrome plated. Attractively packaged.

Size "A", 2¼ inch base. Size "B", 3¼ inch base. Prices (see coupon) include shipping cost. Immediate delivery. C. O. D. orders not accepted. Payment must accompany order.

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Please send PARKITSAFES
__ Size "A" at $2.15 __ Size "B" at $3.15
__ Bridge sets of 4 (Size "A" only) at $8.30

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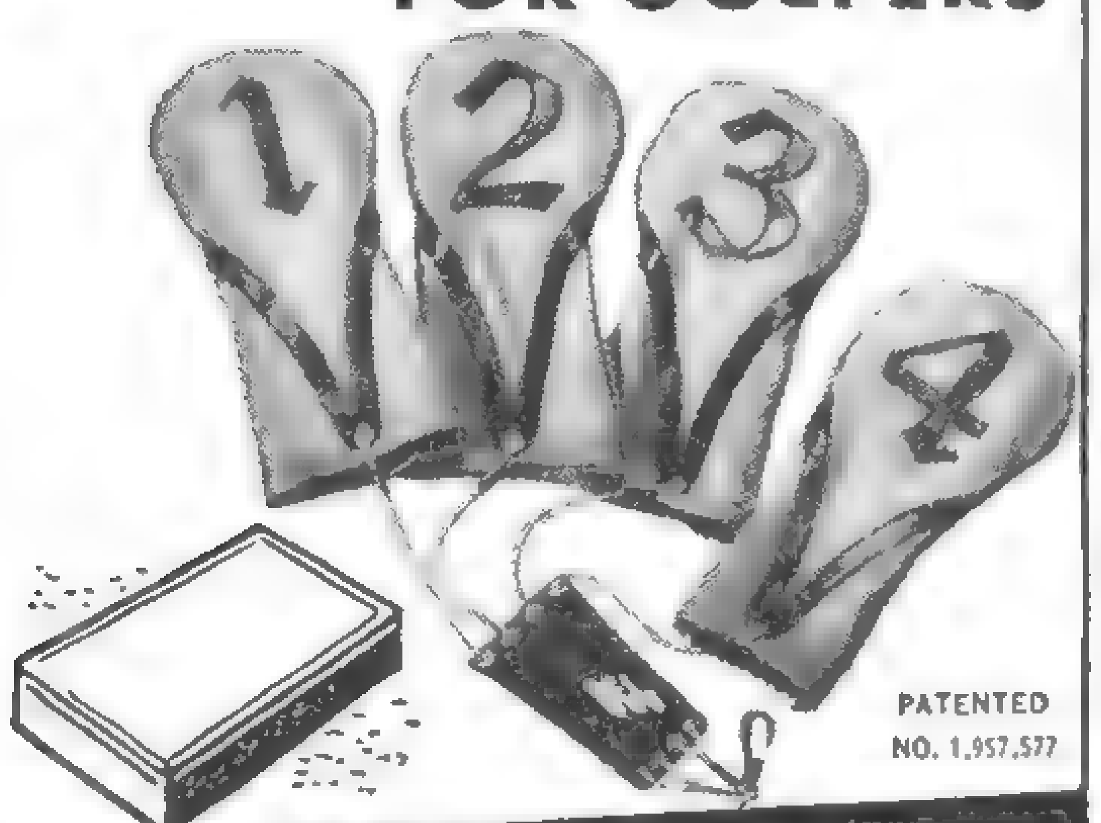
FINEST
Personal GIFT
FOR GOLFERS



Monogrammed
HED-MITS

FINE LEATHERS • PATENTED ASSEMBLY PREVENTS LOSS • INITIALED TAG • GIFT PACK

A New Zealand Deerskin with Ox blood Cordovan trim—Set of four, $15; set of three, $11.25.

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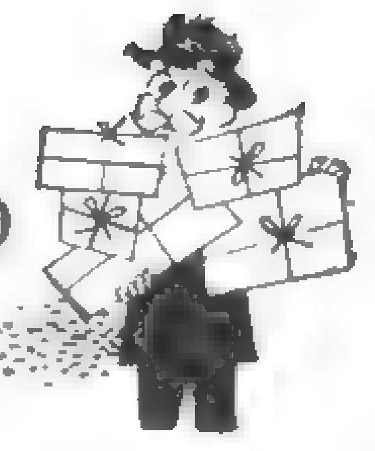
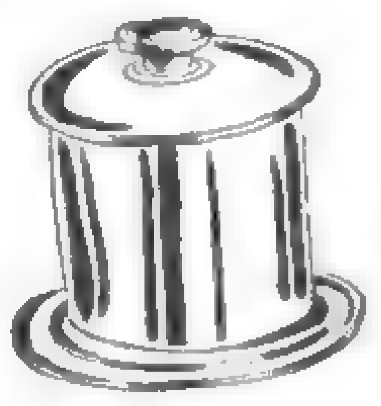
Please send me. ....sets of HED-MITS—
A [3] [4] B [3] [4] C [3] [4] embossed
with following initials..........
Name..........
Street..........
City..........State..........

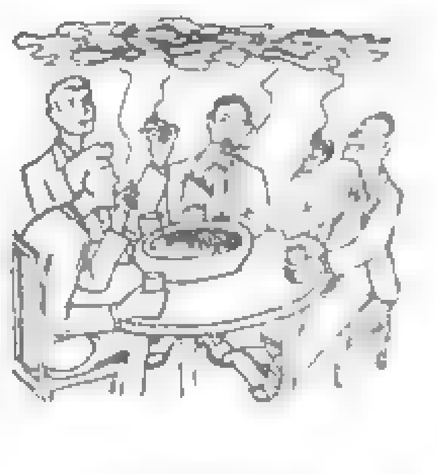
Talking Shop with Esquire



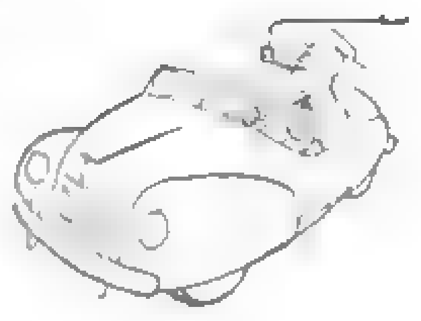
LUXURY ITEMS FOR SMOKERS. Most men herald the return of brass, likewise copper, as part of the decorative scheme of things. An item which combines both these metals is therefore doubly smart. To wit: modern cigarette or cigar humidors made of highly burnished copper with mellow brass bases and heavy brass covers. The cigarette humidor is circular in shape and holds 7 packs of cigs. Cigar humidor will hold 20 cigars depending on the size. The humidor feature in the cover will keep tobacco moist and fresh for many weeks as long as it is dampened once a week.



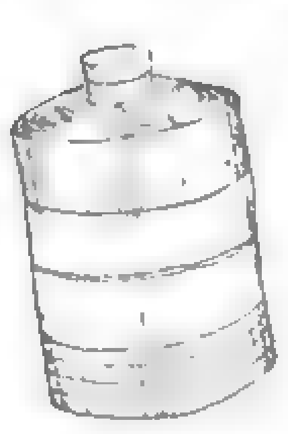
GIANT SIZE ASH TRAY. This 10-inch Goliath is capacious enough to hold enough ashes for the whole board of directors in a single session . . . without dumping. Truly handsome, in a rich forest green china, hand-painted with gold leaf decoration. Simple and masculine in feeling. Same firm also puts out a leather cigarette box with a facsimile of the owner's signature inscribed in gold on a tile set in the top of the box. Box is lined in wood and partitioned for regular and king-sized cigarettes.



PIPE HOLDER FOR DRIVERS. Inveterate pipe smokers will like the convenience of an auto pipe rack made of plastic. Rack is attached to the sun visor, holds several pipes at easy-to-reach distance, pipes drain properly and keep intact.



KEEPS CIGARETTES "FACTORY FRESH". It's a humidor, of course, of beautifully polished spun metal striped with copper-tone bands and lined with mahogany wood which won't warp. The cover contains a humidor, and onto the bottom of the receptacle, nest four copper ash trays which fit snugly together into the one unit, ready to be detached when company arrives. Interior of the humidor is sectioned into four compartments to hold four different brands, each comp holds ten. A unique feature is the flavorer. Now get this. A cigarette can be flavored to individual taste by moistening the humidifier with a few drops of rum, whisky, wine or menthol. The gals can use perfume (that's all brother). Just don't let 'em mess with *your* humidor.



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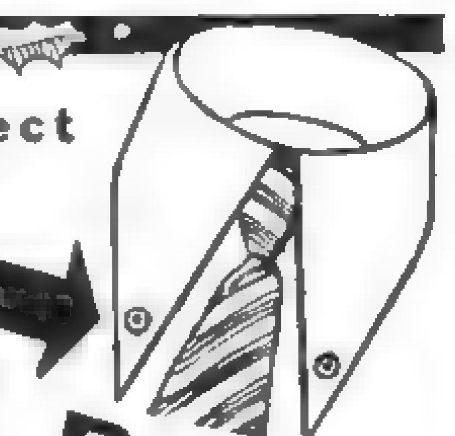

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NO MORE CURLED UP COLLARS!

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Useful, attractive, easy to snap on, off! Simply pin-pierce ornamental Bob through collar and shirt . . . fasten military-type clutch from beneath. Will not harm fabric. Patented internationally. Only $1.50 per pair plus 20% tax.

THE FIRST CHOICE OF WELL DRESSED MEN

On sale at better men's shops everywhere, or order direct

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MANUFACTURERS OF SMART ACCESSORIES
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now personalized
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Drastically reduced. Always nationally advertised at $4.00 each, now you may buy direct from the manufacturer at $2.00 each or $4.00 (postpaid — no tax) for the matching set.

Our wafer-thin compact and handsome case for twenty cigarettes, shown above, are beautifully styled with individual EASTERLING designs etched into gold-colored jeweler's bronze.

We can personalize each case with one of your initials on the back FREE.

Also available with stallion's head, Scottie dog, royal crown motif . . . same prices.

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Buy direct from maker. Our 10th year producing fine Staturaid custom made height increasing shoes.

HOW TO ORDER: Send correct shoe size (or old shoe), with deposit, balance C.O.D. plus postage; or if you remit in full, we pay mailing charges.

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A Personal Gift for a Shooter
The HOPPE GUN CLEANING PACK

He'll doubly welcome this compact, complete gun cleaning kit because it is practical and useful and its giving suggests THOUGHTFUL—not merely casual—selection. Sold by all Sporting Goods and Gun Dealers or send $1 to

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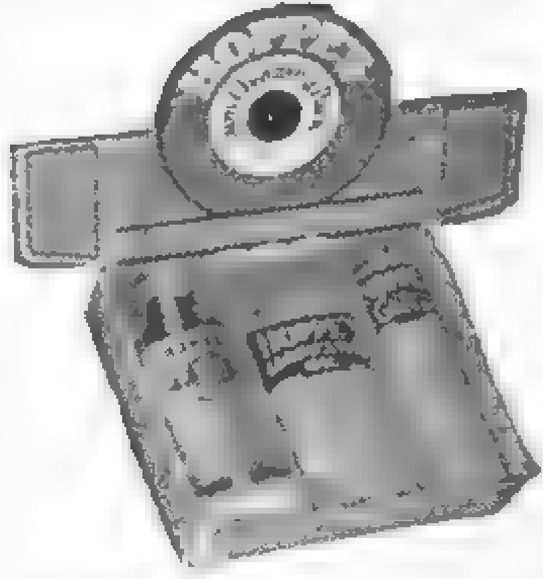

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COOKIE JAR
Aromatic PIPE MIXTURE
25¢
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WITH A
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Your a-c/d-c shaver can give much faster . . . cleaner . . . smoother shaves. RANGER Electronic Inverter* changes house current to direct current — increases cutting efficiency up to 88% — better for motor, too. Usually eliminates shaver radio static. Approved by Underwriters Laboratories.

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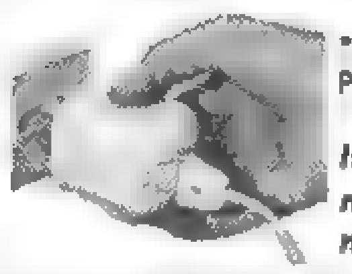

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Under money-back guarantee plan, send me ____ RANGER Inverter(s) at $4.95 each. ____ Money order or check enclosed. Add Sales Tax in California
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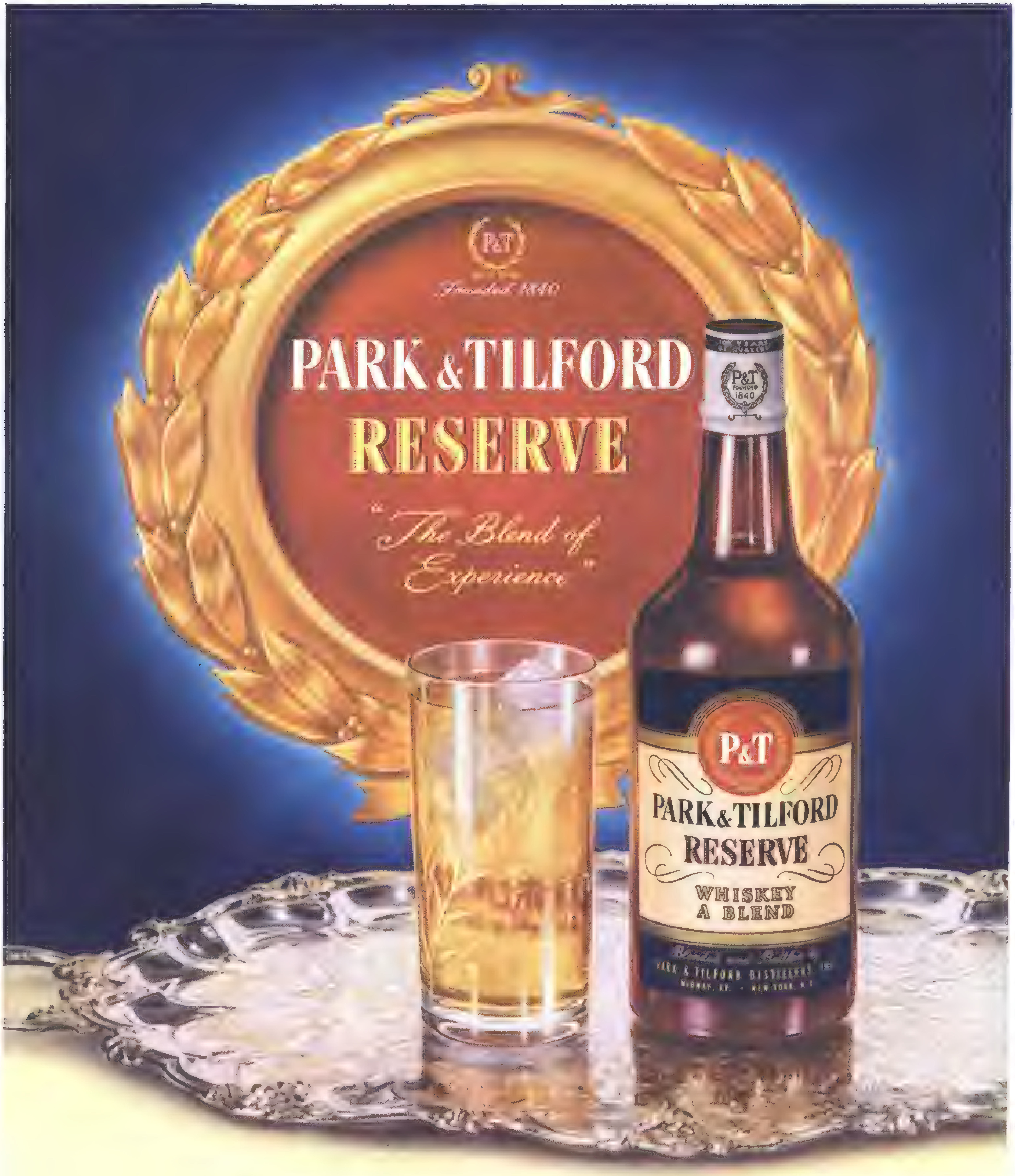
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A BLEND
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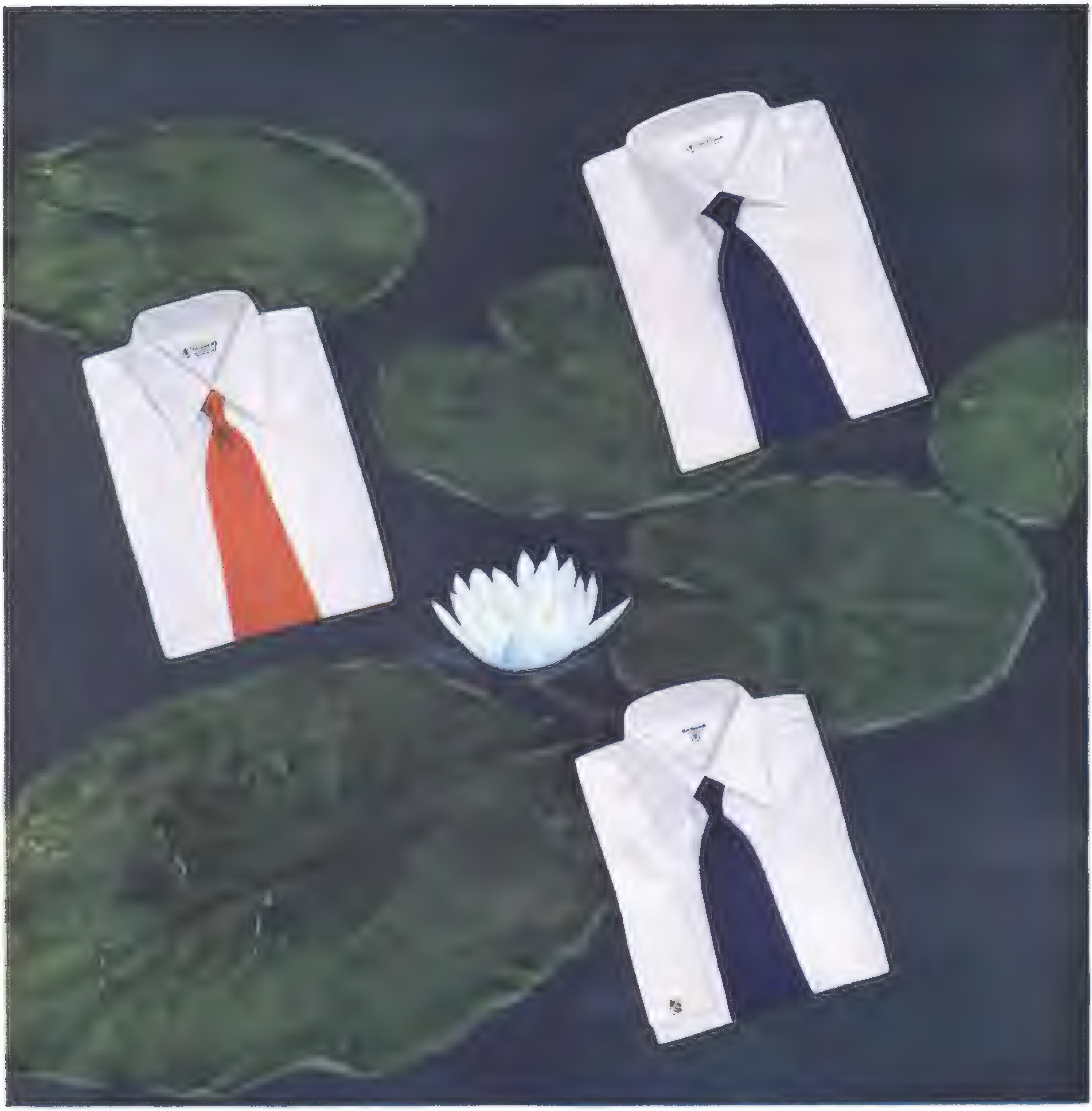
Behind every bottle is the quality-tradition of Park & Tilford and the knowledge gained in over a century of experience. That is why it is—

"the finest-tasting whiskey of its type in America!"

PARK & TILFORD DISTILLERS, INC., NEW YORK, N. Y. • 70% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS • 86.8 PROOF



(*above*) Exclusive Van Heusen ONE-PIECE COLLAR that stays neat without starch, on Van Heusen "Four Hundred" Shirt.

(*upper*) Extra-wide-spread EDEN. (*lower*) Average length CARSON.

white beauties

beauties for style...beauties for quality

(*above*) Wide-spread Britt. (*upper*) Informal Button-Down. (*lower*) Long-point Van Ciro.

It's been a long, long time since you saw quality white shirts like these. Smooth broadcloths that wear and wear. (They're laboratory checked from raw yarn to finished shirt!) Rich oxfords at ease with informal or business suits. (More than a thousand tests a month insure uniform quality.) All Sanforized, all laundry tested, all double checked by Van Heusen's own testing laboratory. A new shirt free if your Van Heusen shrinks out of size! And, they're all distinguished by Van Heusen's collar styling and sewmanship, adding extra quality to each detail: Figure-fit lines . . . action-room at shoulders, armholes, elbows . . . tug-proof pearl buttons. . . . Yes, we're boasting about every one of them—and so will you! $3.25, $3.95 and $4.50.

New! Van Heusen Ties in Nylon Grenadine, in a wide range of smart solid colors, $1.50.

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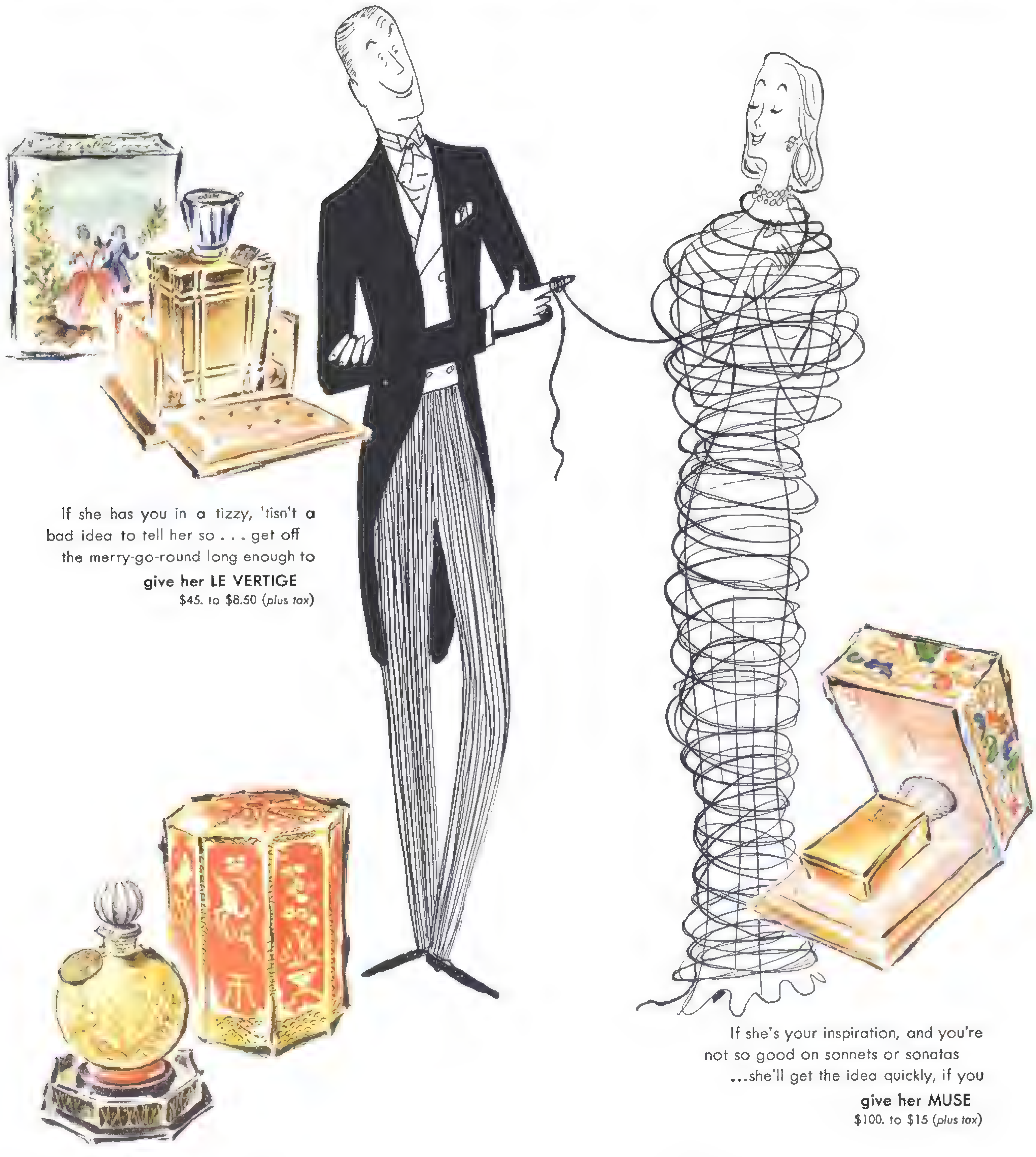
...beauties for value... **Van Heusen shirts**

COME CHRISTMAS...WIND THE LADY AROUND YOUR FINGER!



If she has you in a tizzy, 'tisn't a bad idea to tell her so . . . get off the merry-go-round long enough to
give her LE VERTIGE
$45. to $8.50 (*plus tax*)

If she's your inspiration, and you're not so good on sonnets or sonatas ...she'll get the idea quickly, if you
give her MUSE
$100. to $15 (*plus tax*)

If she's the mysterious type—meaning you don't see why she hasn't fallen for your blandishments...*yet*—
give her A SUMA
$40. to $6.50 (*plus tax*)

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HAVALITE
PENCIL LIGHTER

The modern precision writing instrument enjoyed by every smoker. Lightweight metal, anodized in permanent colors. Snuffer cap, (a must for pipe smokers) unique patented clip, and fully guaranteed. For an unusual but practical gift . . . buy a HAVALITE

Choice of COLORS
- Gold
- Black
- Maroon
- Green
- Fuschia
- Silver
- Blue
- Wine
- Yellow
- Orange

Or a two tone combination with the upper barrel one color, the lower, another.

$5 postpaid from

Send a $5 bill, Money order, or check to
MISSION METALCRAFTERS, Inc.
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and HAVALITE will come to you postpaid in an attractive gift box. Be sure and specify color.

California Sales Tax is included
It Lights!
Upper Barrel
Lower Barrel
It Writes!

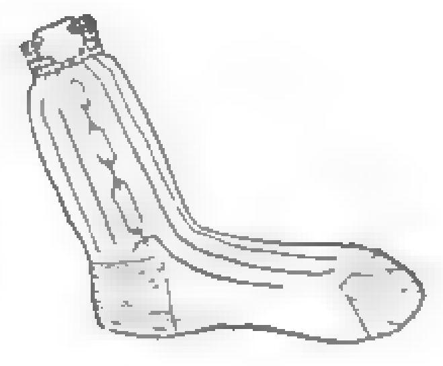
RUMBA TUMBLERS
Gift Set of 8 Shatterproof Tumblers
by
X. Cugat
RUMBA KING

$3.95
delivered in U.S.A.

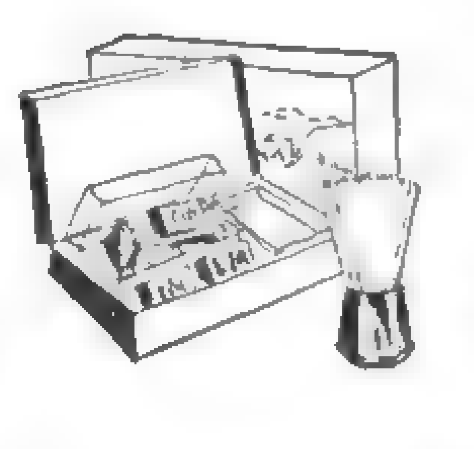
Out just in time to solve those last-minute gift problems, this set of sleek 12-oz. tumblers features droll, colorful caricatures by Xavier Cugat, cunning artist with baton or brush. Each of the 8 tumblers depicts a typical group of dancers and musicians of a different Latin American country. Big, stunning gift box. (Sorry, no C.O.D.'s)

ELDON PRODUCTS
733 E. Gage
Los Angeles 1, Cal.

Talking Shop with Esquire

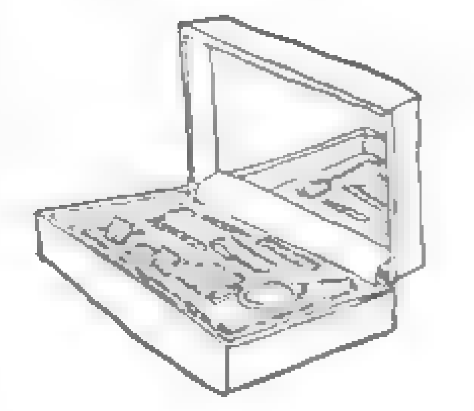


"STILL A JERK." This popular GI song from "Call Me Mister" applies also to those well known garterless socks whose slogan reads: "Jerk 'em on . . . they stay put". The shorties, the 10″ length are still going strong, and really stay up, no danger of a chap looking like a college frosh of yesteryear with socks drooping about the ankle. And there is now a grown up, full length 14″ version of the elastic top socks. Rayons, stripes, argyles, clocks, ribs . . . a full range of colors. Dandy Christmas gift . . . 3 pairs at a clip.

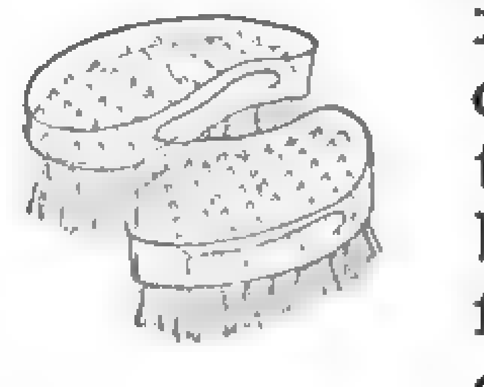


SHAVING SET. Nothing like a "set" to go big at holiday time. Inside a brown leatherette box comes a micromatic gold-plated razor, a nylon bristle shaving brush with handsome chunky lucite handle, plus two additional sheaths of blades.

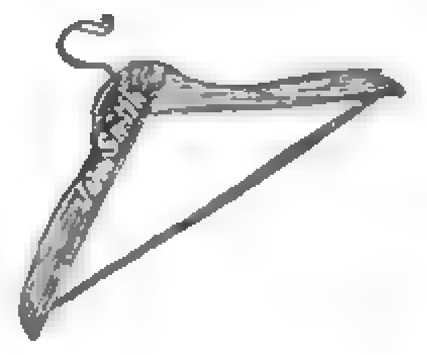
GIVE GLOVES. Don't be unimaginative and say "he has a pair of gloves". Sure he has. But does he have the right gloves for the right occasions? Frigsample: for cold winter nights . . . dressy American-made mocha gloves with seamless wool lining; hand sewn with black saddle stitch and with elastic gathering on the palm side to keep out the wintry blasts? Does he have sports gloves to go with tweeds? The new 2-tone deerskin numbers, with brushed deerskin (which looks like suede) on the back and a grain deerskin palm? How about driving gloves. Newest ones are made of horsehide with perforations across the back for air conditioning. Also with special groove stitching down each of the fingers of the palm side to provide a better grip for driving or riding.



TREASURE CHEST. Fellows who are fussy about "matching" accessories can delve into a gift chest containing a complete wardrobe of popular jewelry for men. Box itself is of simulated leather, with a mirror in the top cover. Can be used as a jewel case for the chiffonier. Jewelry itself is handsome and gold-plated in a simple, diagonal striped design, key chain, tie clip, cuff links, belt buckle, etc.



RIGHT AND LEFT HAND MILITARY BRUSHES. Don't know why someone didn't come up with this sensible idea before. Now come crystal-like plastic brushes, with backs shaped to fit the hands, indented properly for a good grip of right or left. They're beauties, masculine in design, and extremely useful.



PERSONALIZED HANGERS. Good utilitarian gift for a chap at college. A dozen hangers with his name printed on each. Hangers are made up in the new 19″ length which is an oversized version for husky guys and there are 17″ lengths for medium to smaller chaps and teen age boys. Hangers are shoulder shaped, ¾″ thick concave curved back wishbone type.

Ranger

For answers to all queries, send self-addressed stamped envelope to Ranger, Esquire, 366 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

NEW
"EASY-TO-SEE" THERMOMETER

SEE at a glance HOW COLD IT IS OUTSIDE from inside

Big red figures on 3½″ transparent dial. Easily read even 10 ft. away. Attaches anywhere on windowpane. Special weatherproof adhesive supplied. Reliable, accurate, attractive. Money-back guarantee. Sorry, no C.O.D's.

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Cleans Between Teeth Where Brushing Can't
REMOVES FERMENTING FOOD PARTICLES. PREVENTS DECAY. ASSURES A SWEETER BREATH.
LASTS A LIFETIME • • EASILY REFILLED
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Genuine
HICKORY SMOKED
HAM
FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Tender, tasty shellbark hickory smoked ham . . . entirely different in taste . . . utterly delicious in flavor. Ready to enjoy without extra preparation . . . equally delicious boiled, baked or fried according to your pet recipe. Gift wrapped in gorgeous three color vegetable parchment. Individually packed in cellophane filled carton, brightly labeled. Clever die-cut Recipe Book attached carries your name, or recipient's, neatly printed. The Gift Supreme for you and your friends to enjoy the year 'round.

$1.39 per pound

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☐ Cash, Check or Money Order Enclosed
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BLUE BOY PRODUCTS
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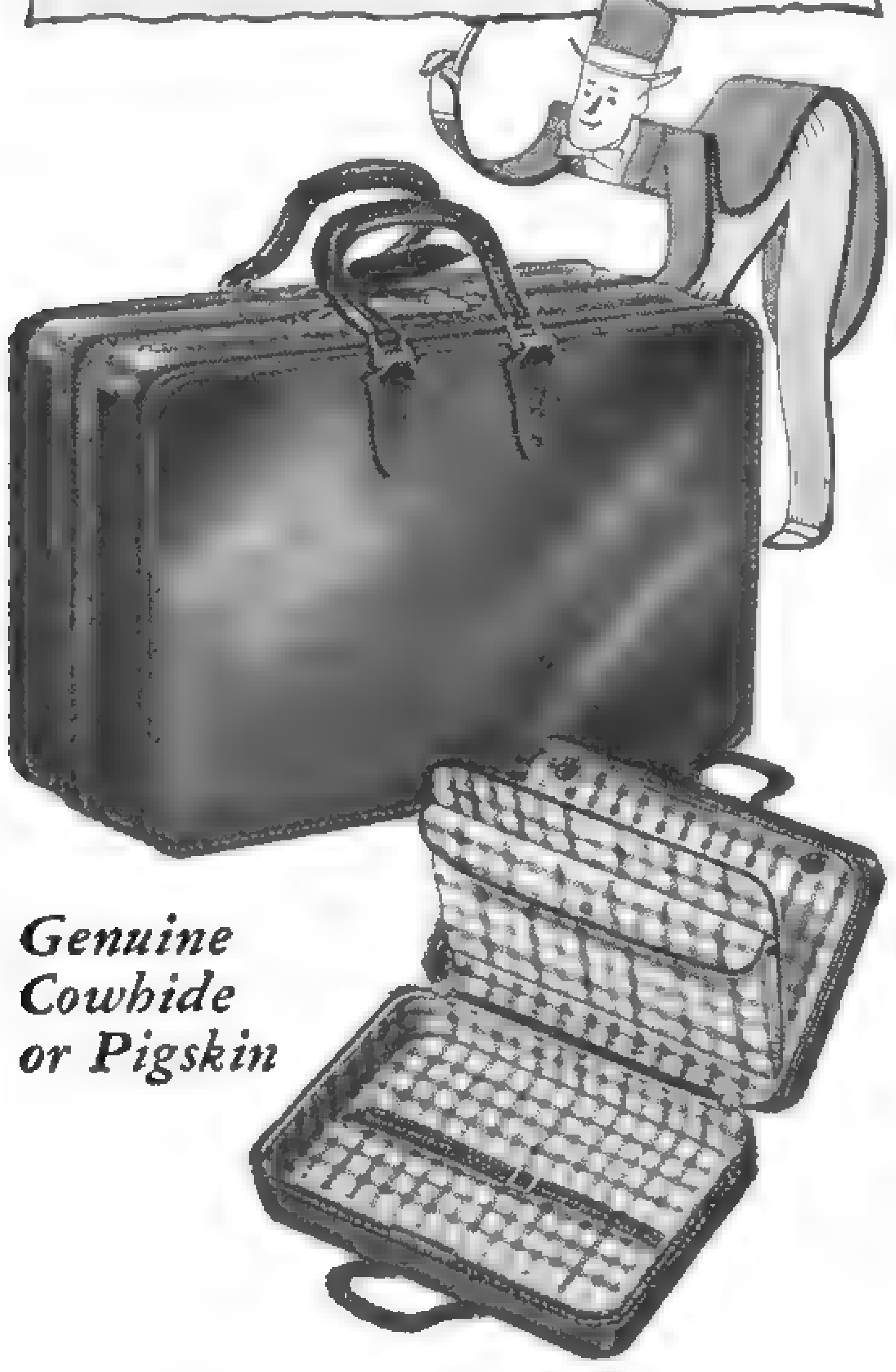
SOUTH SAINT JOSEPH, MO.

HOLDS ENOUGH FOR A DAY
OR A WEEK..."THIN MAN"
"Overknighter"



Genuine Cowhide or Pigskin

This smart little bag holds all you need for a day or a week. Accordion flap and soft sides allow plenty of give for extras — roomy pocket for accessories — double zipper that locks at the top. At department stores and luggage shops everywhere.

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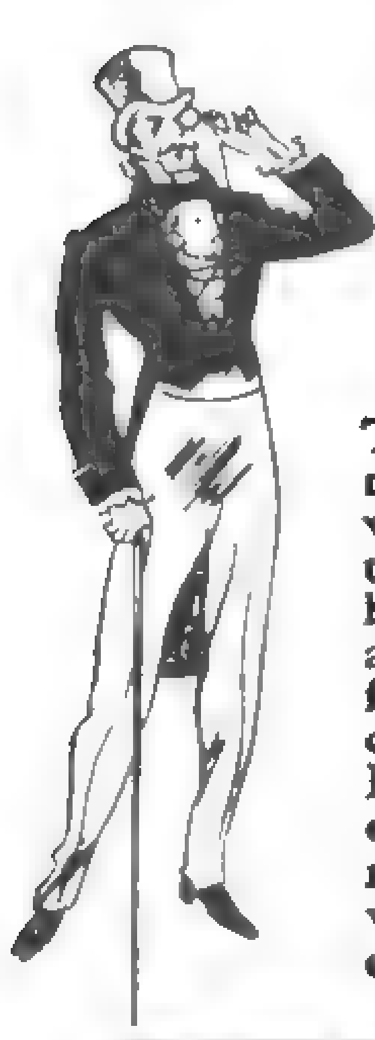
DUALISTS
GENUINE Lonite BRUSH

$12.50



Gentlemen-your choice!

To preserve the traditional neatness gentlemen have always desired — choose either the "Dualists" military brushes hand-crafted to fit the right and left hands — or the "Squire" for the man who prefers a handle on his brush. Genuine Lonite Brushes give a lifetime of service. In Men's Departments at fine stores everywhere. Write for name of nearest dealer.

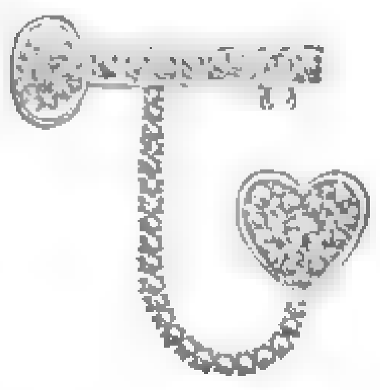
$7.50

THE SQUIRE
GENUINE Lonite BRUSH

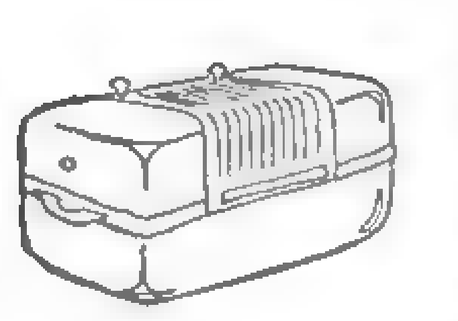
Lonite CORP.
REG U.S. PAT. OFF.
BROCKTON 44, MASS.

Talking Shop with Esquire

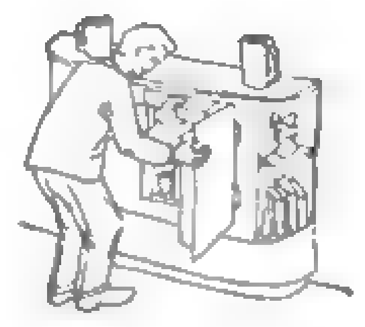
GIVE HER RHINESTONES, a jewelled comb for her tresses, two rows of 2 carat rhinestone as trim; a flashing rhinestone barette, or rhinestone tipped tuck combs. A gorgeous key to her heart chatelaine, heart 2" in size, and done in solid rhinestones. Attached to the heart by a sterling silver chain, a key, also glittering.



IT COOLS AND IT HEATS! Its a portable air conditioner, so light in weight, it can be carried from room to room as needed. The conditioner is a self-contained unity and plugs into any standard electric socket. If you want to cool your room, its done by forced evaporation of water through a specially treated aspen filter in the built-in reservoir (reservoir holds 3 gals. of water and can be refilled easily). A single control knob turns the conditioner on, and switches easily from cold to hot. Heat is provided by a specially engineered electric heating element which brings an average size room to a comfortable temperature. The conditioner also filters out dust, dirt, pollen and other foreign particles.



AMBIDEXTROUS BAR— Here is the answer to all the problems of the gregarious character who stands in as a junior member of the bartenders union. A salesman who used to suffer from rigor mortis everytime he had a client in the home stretch decided that while he couldn't always put the words he wanted in the guys' mouth, he could help himself in this direction if he could get a glass in his hand . . . hence this unworldly addition to the otherwise arid office. This unit which is ideal for the office, home and apartment is equipped with enough space to handle all the accoutrements necessary to dispense drinks of all kinds and has refrigeration space to handle snacks, one hundred ice cubes, in addition to all the other stuff you'd need for office entertainment. Bars are available in Spanish Ivory, Antique Red, and Antique Brown. As a necessary precaution the tops are laminated to resist the effects of strong liquids . . . For the last word in office furnishings you'll want this refrigerated bar.



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Torso Cuff Links
$60 the pair in 14K solid gold
Gold plated on sterling silver.
$12 50 the pair
Nude Tie or Money Clip
$60 in 14K solid gold
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Gold plated on sterling silver
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All taxes and postage included
Christmas delivery guaranteed on orders received by Dec. 20th
Write for brochure of
ORIGINALS by
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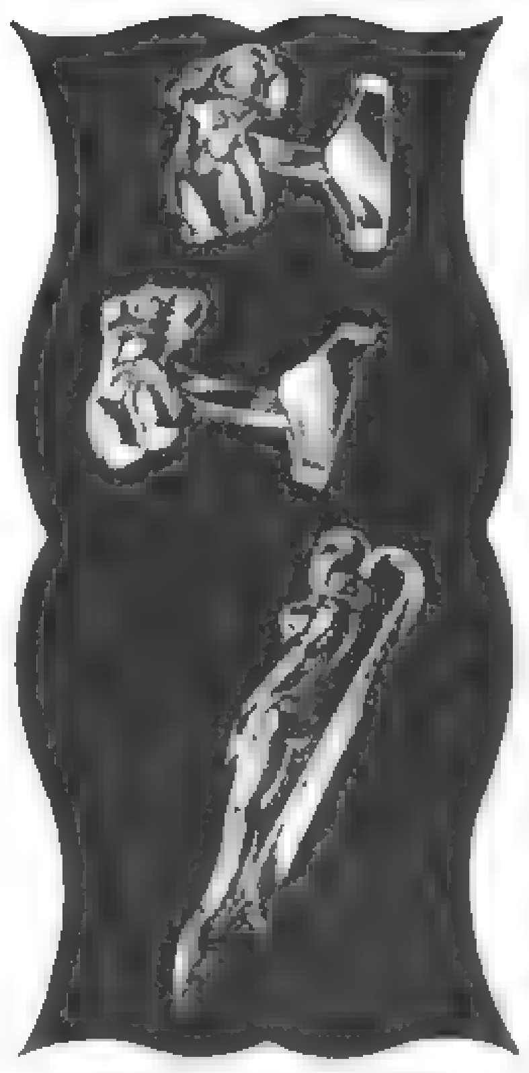

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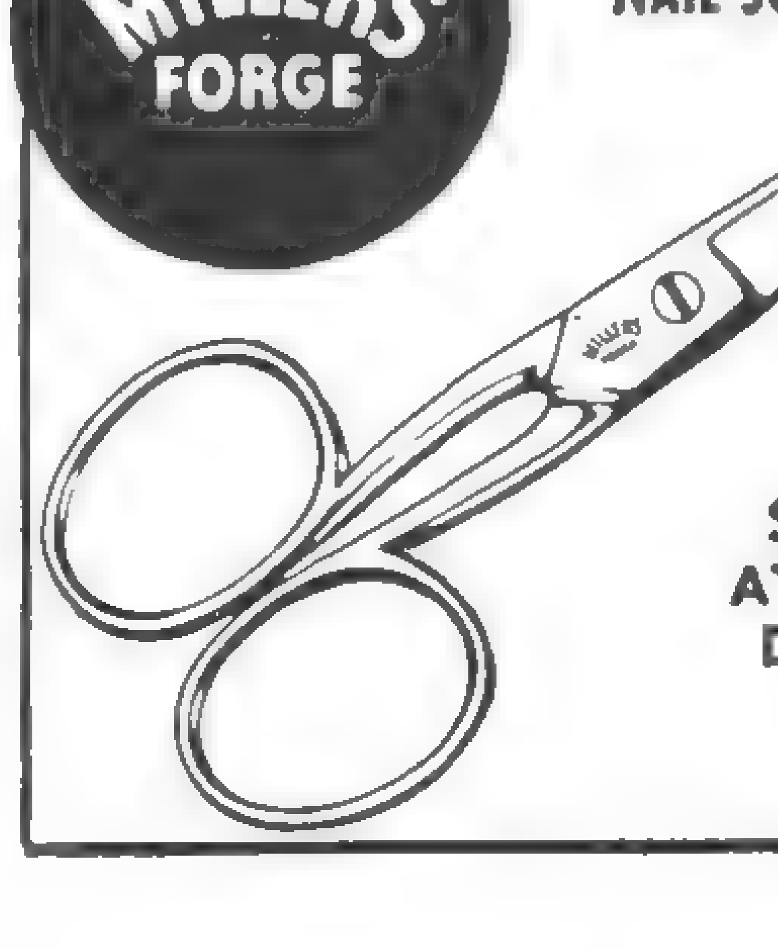

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HUMIDORS

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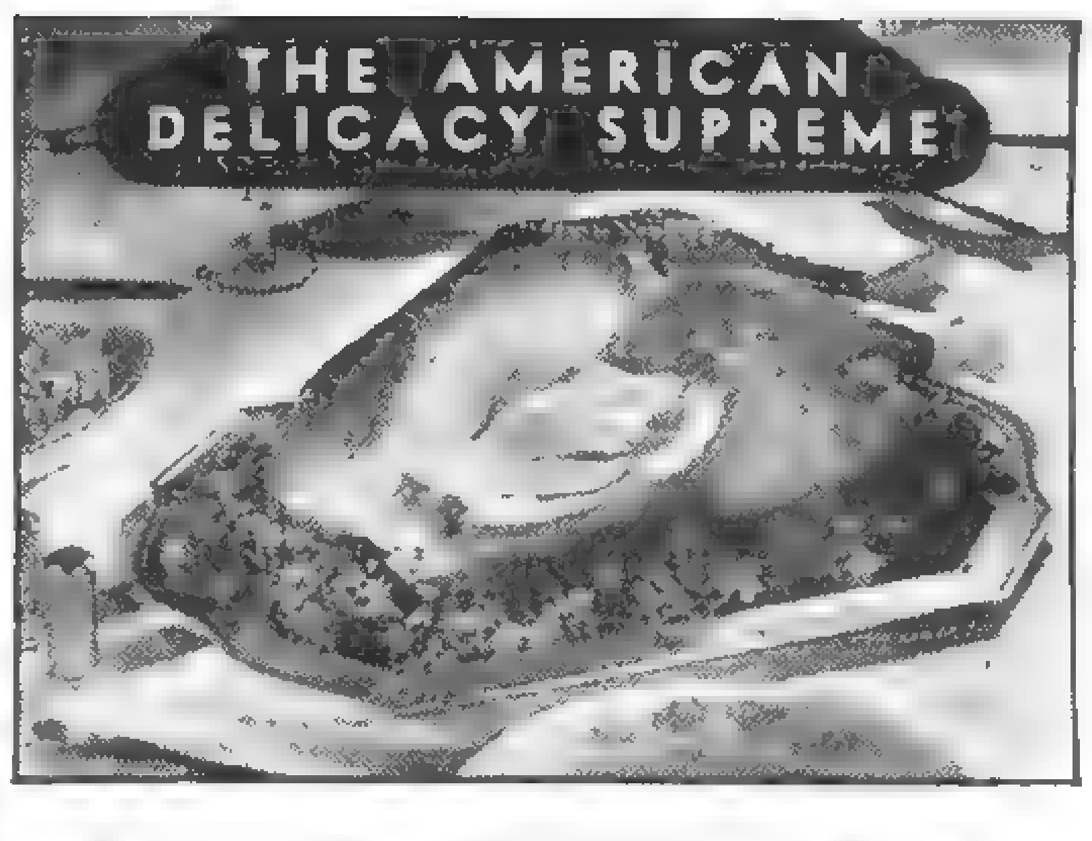

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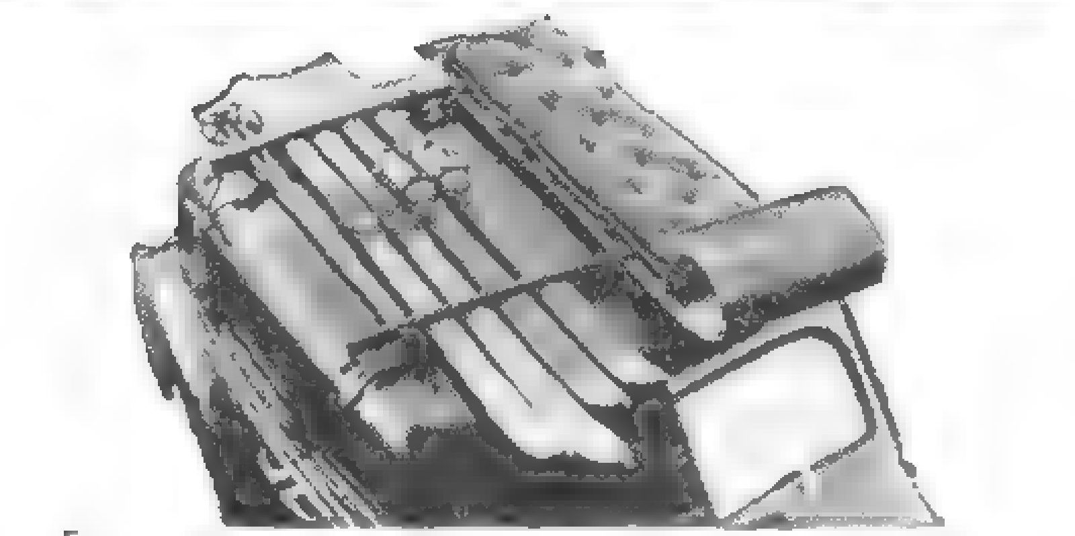

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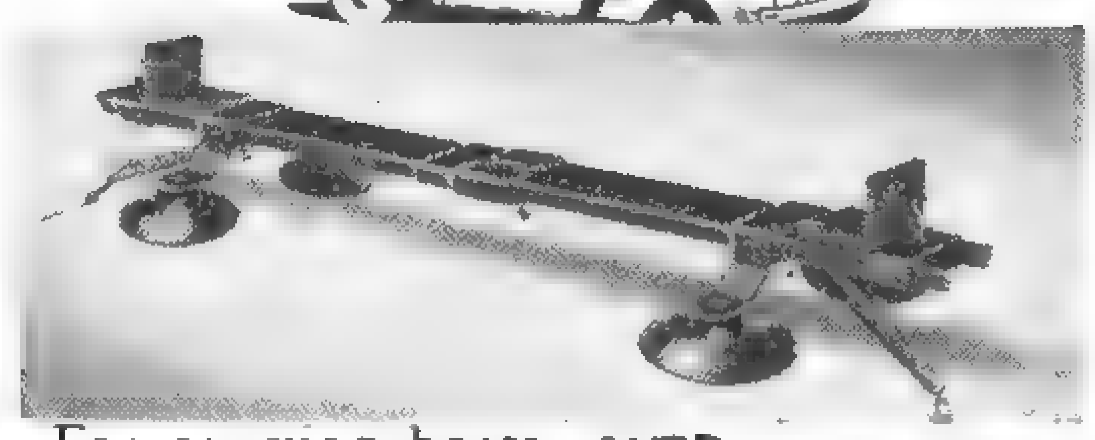

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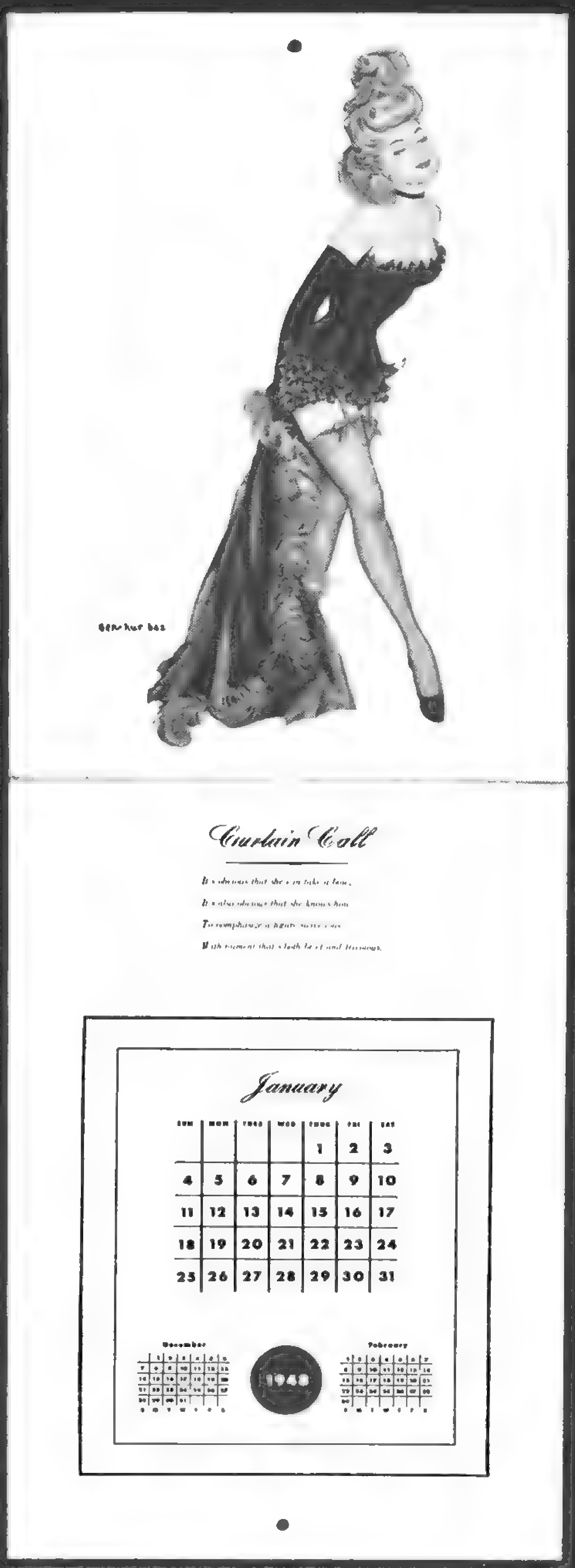


Curtain Call

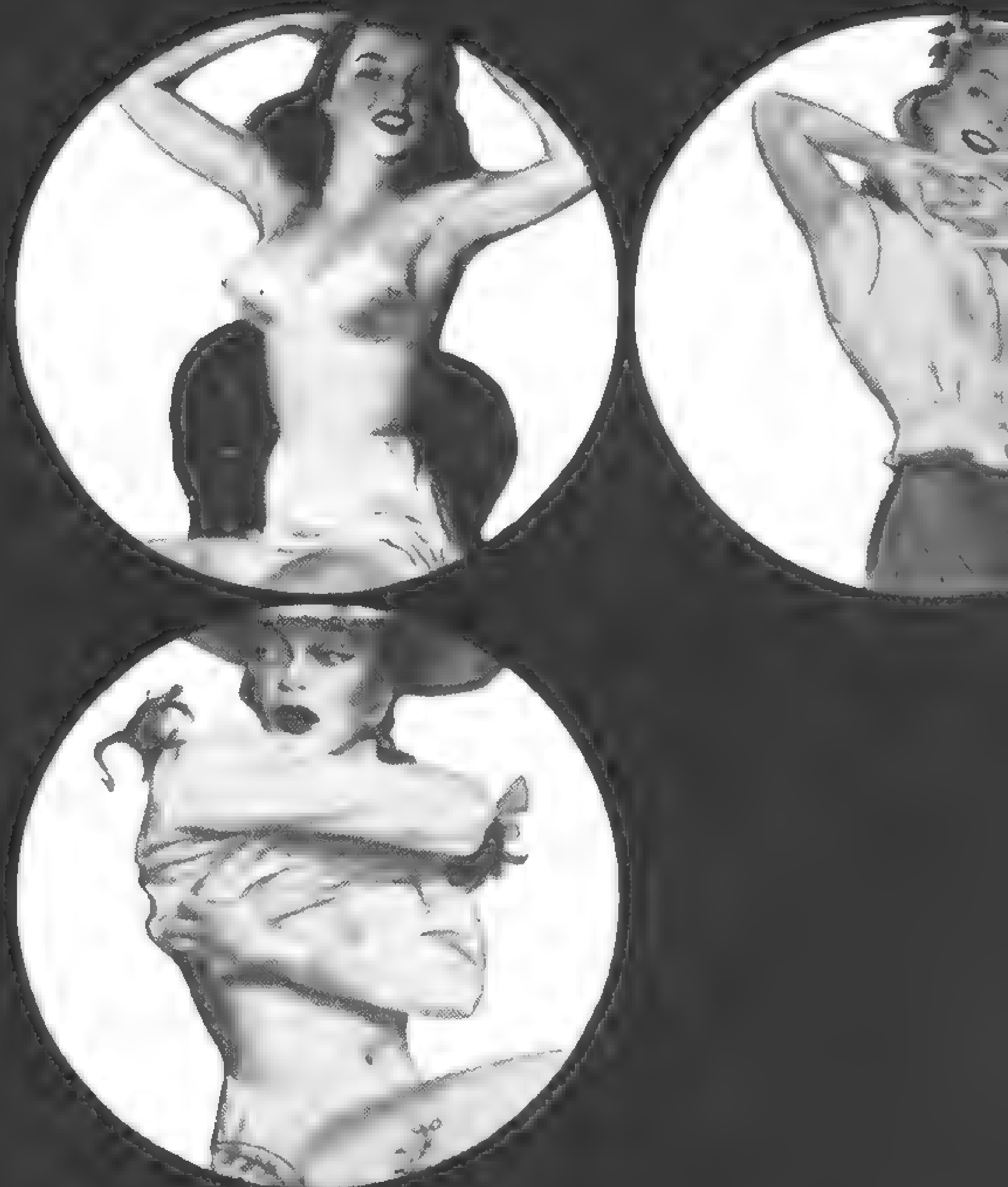
January

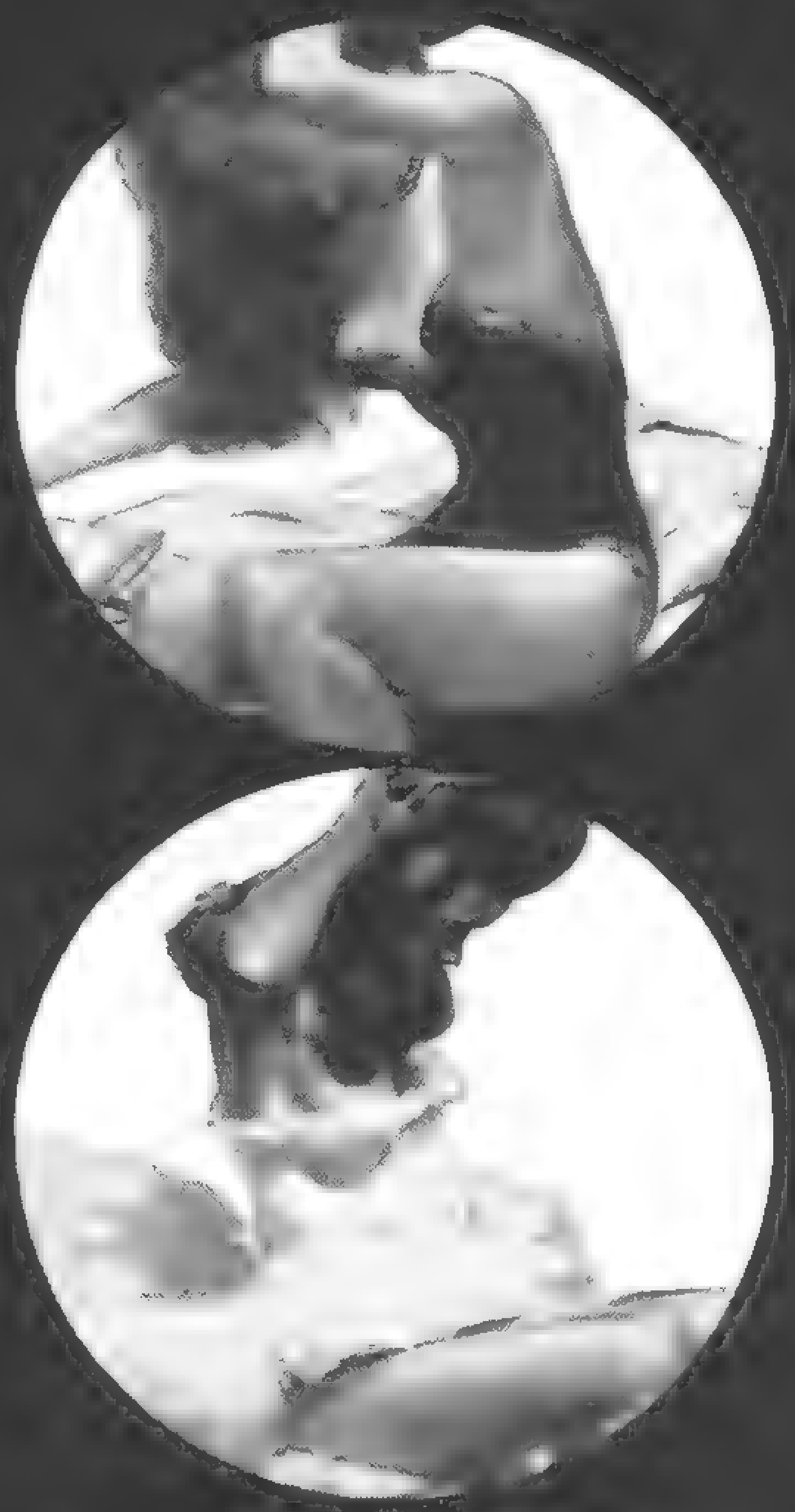
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December

1948

February





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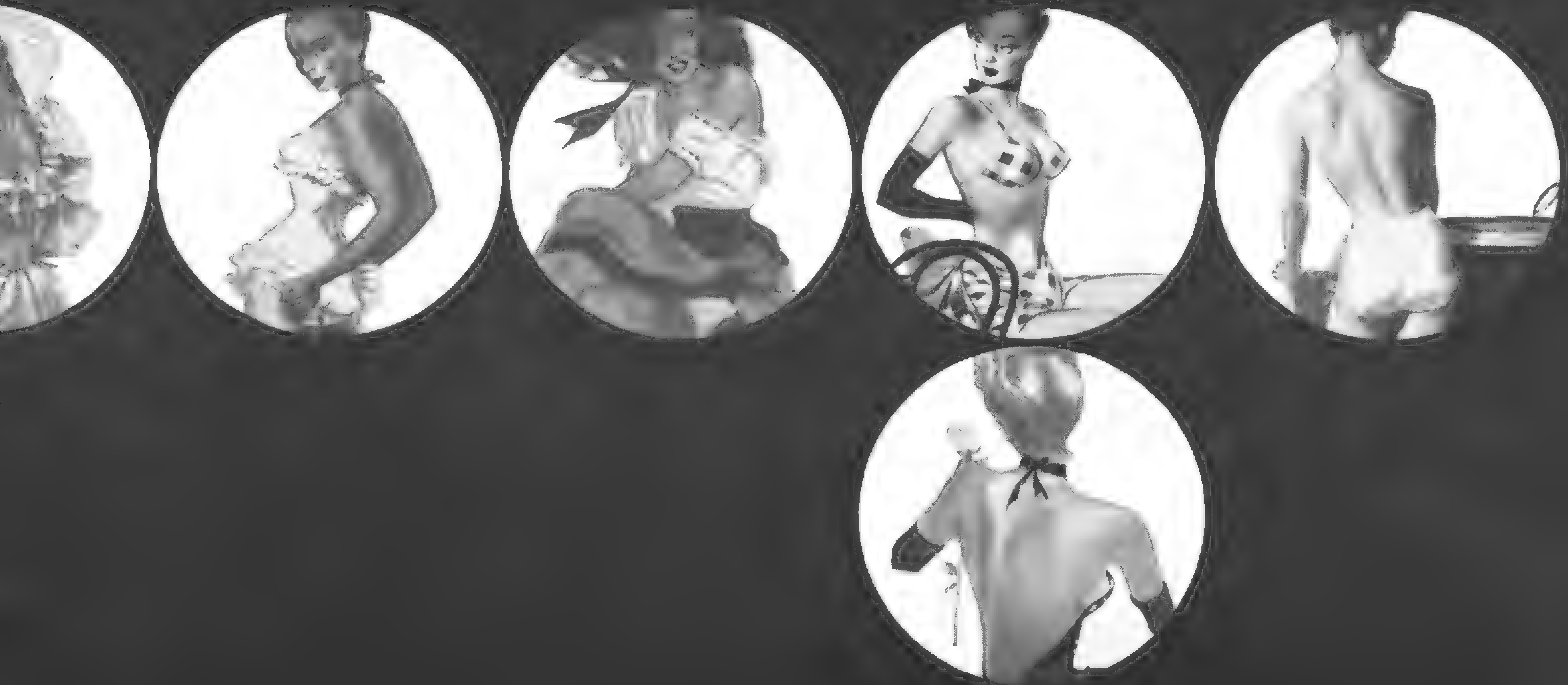

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GIVE A "THIN MAN" BILLFOLD!

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**NO BULGE IN THE "THIN MAN"
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No matter how full you stuff it, the "Thin Man" folds flat and trim, prevents bulges in hip or breast pocket. Holds its smooth lines no matter how much a man puts in it.

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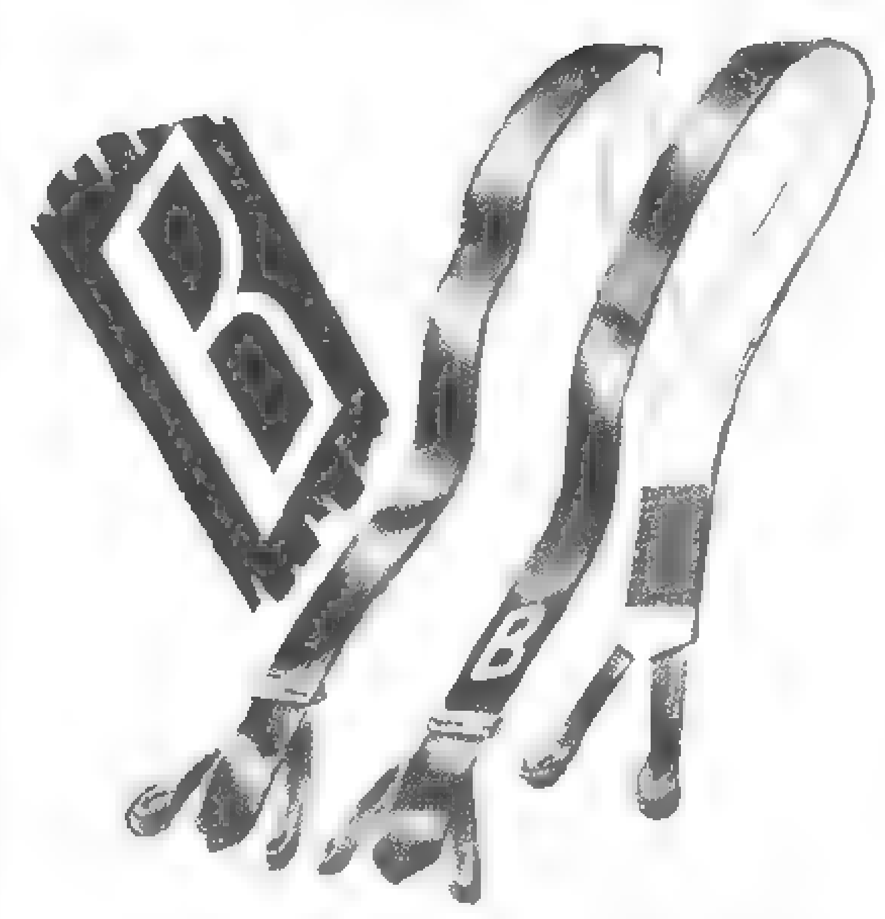

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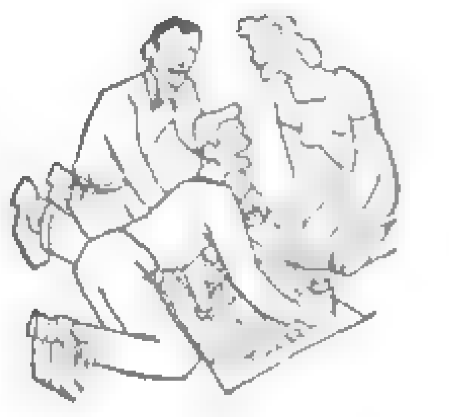
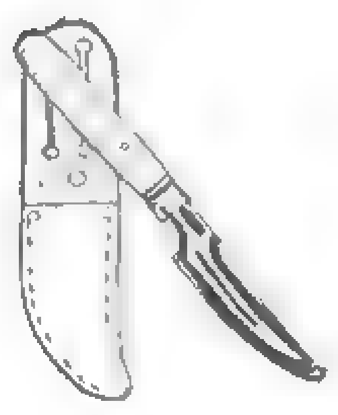
Talking Shop with Esquire

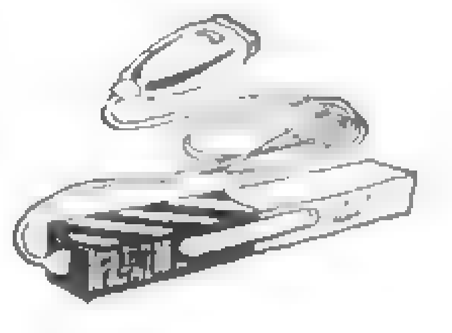
GO TO THE RACES IN YOUR OWN LIVING ROOM. New horse racing game makes its appearance. Equipment consists of a game board with the "odds" board at lower end, a deck of special playing cards, miniature horses, playing money, mutuel tickets and instructions. You can actually play four different games . . . "Odds", wherein the odds are determined before the betting begins; "Players Pool" . . . bets pooled and split between winners; "Jockey's Choice", each player "rides" a horse, and "Odd's Blind" . . . bets made before odds are determined. Fast fun. Any number can play.



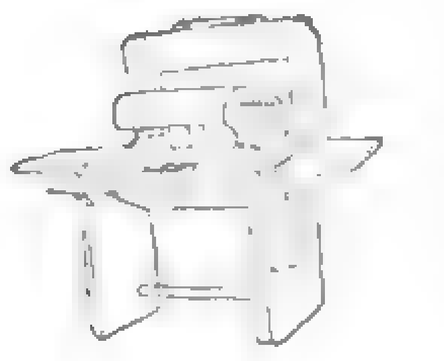
SPORTSMAN'S KNIFE . . . a honey, custom crafted by hand; blade hand forged from imported Swedish tool steel, hand ground and hand finished, tempered uniformly in an electric furnace. Blade is razor sharp and perfectly balanced. Comes in 5, 5½, 6 and 7" blade lengths, with blade ⅛"-3/16" thick. The handle is made from the heaviest sole leather, designed to fit the hand. Hilts are of solid brass and give good hand protection.



ELECTRIC SHAVER BATTERY. Going on a hunting trip? You can take your electric shaver along and use it in the great outdoors without benefit of house current. Just plug it into a self contained battery encased in a slender narrow box with a mirror on the side. Battery will operate any AC-DC shaver for up to a month of normal shaving. Weighs only 20 oz. Another handsome toting gadget for hunting trips . . . a leather holster to slip on over an ordinary belt. Only instead of holding your pistol . . . *this* holster carries your favorite pipe, safe and handy.



IRON SITTING DOWN. Wow, wait 'til she sees the new consol ironer. Its an automatic portable ironer which will literally take the girls off their feet. When the console is closed, it looks like a table. Opened up, there's a large 26" roll, which operates with a single feather touch control lever which starts, stops and presses. She can sit down while ironing, no lifting or pushing, just guide the clothes.



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12 to 15—A to EEE

Forced to wear unattractive shoes because of big feet? Not a bit! DON MAIL has the smart new styles in large sizes. Specially designed, symmetrically balanced for trim looks . . . sturdily built of top quality leathers, for comfort and wear. Satisfaction guaranteed.

FRENCH TOES (illus.) or CUSTOM TOES, black or copper brown. WING TIPS (as illustrated), MEDALLIONS or MOCCASIN TOES, Brown only.

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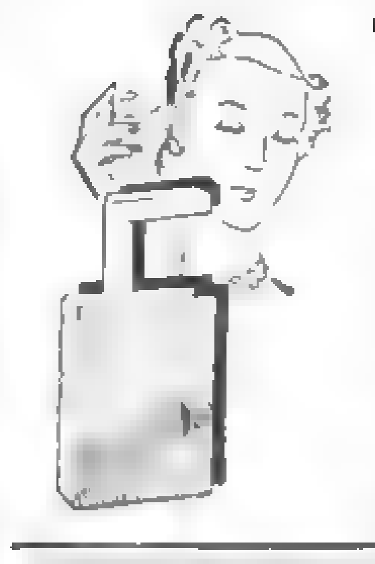
Color________________ (plus charges)____
(Write name and address on separate sheet) Prepaid____



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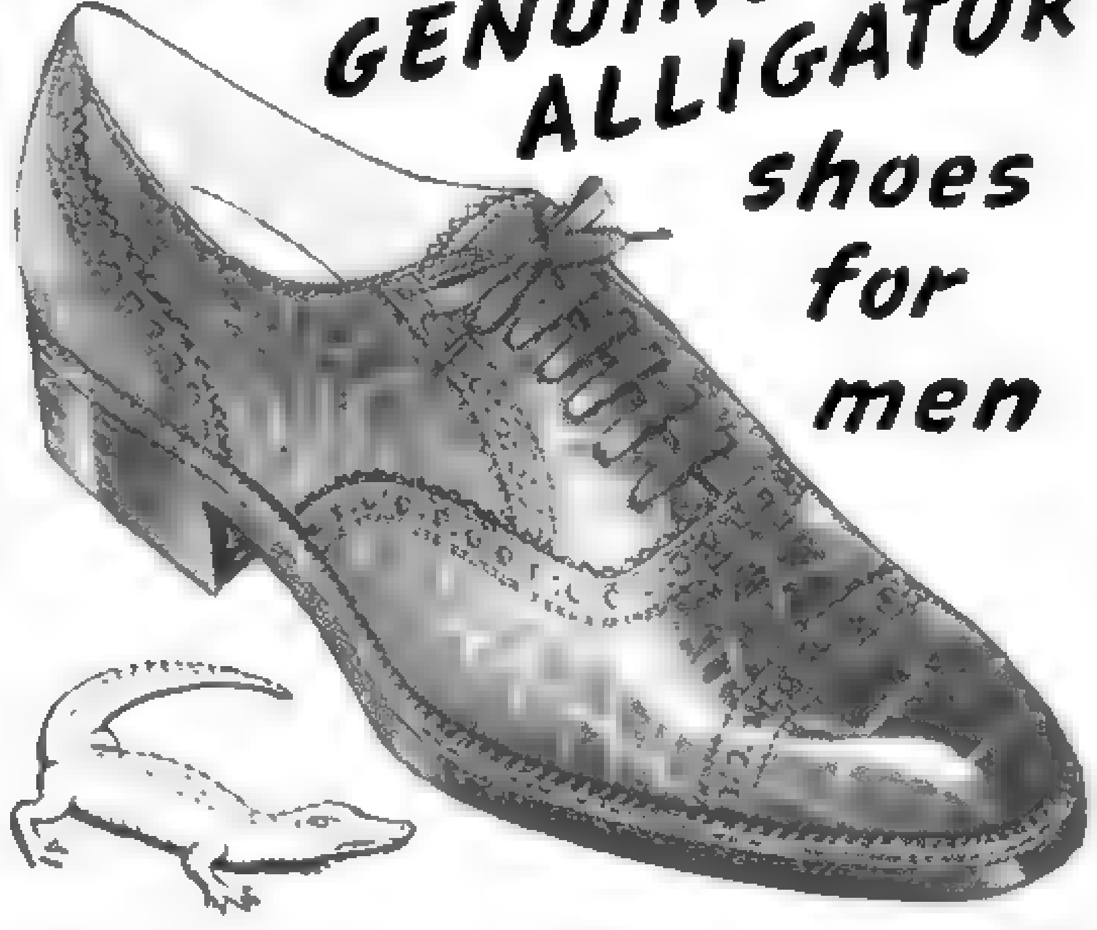

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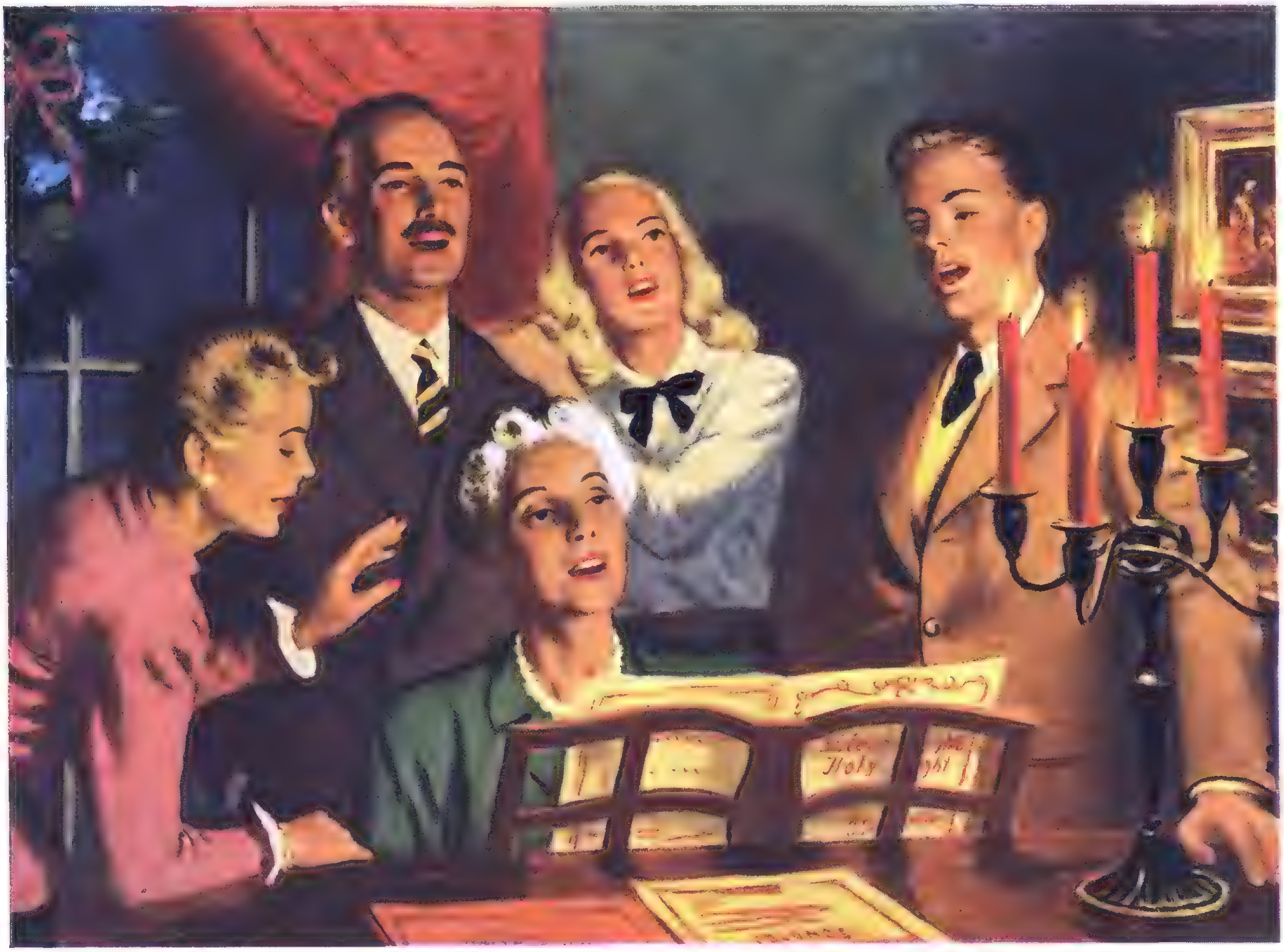


MOTHER. Does she always think of everyone at Christmas—except herself? Take her breath away this Christmas with an exquisitely designed, amazingly accurate Hamilton Watch. The Clara (below) has 17 jewels, 14K natural or white gold-filled case . . **$60.50.**

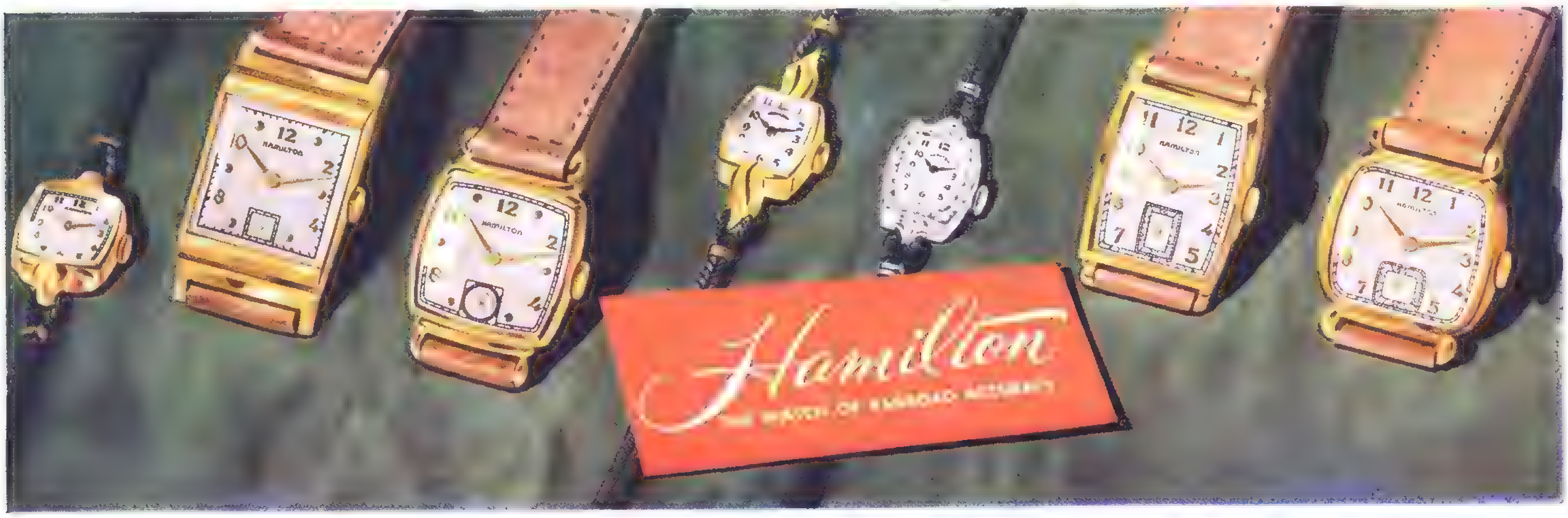
FATHER. Tell him how thrilled you are about his promotion with a Hamilton—the fine American Watch. Below (left), the Wesley—19 jewels, 14K gold case. *Medallion* movement . . . **$180.** Below (right), the Norman—19 jewels, 14K gold-filled case . . . . **$66.**

DAUGHTER. Did she make the Honor Roll her very first term at college? She deserves something super special this Christmas—a precious Hamilton Watch. The lovely Lana (shown below) is a suggestion—17 jewels, 14K natural or white gold case . . . . **$71.50.**

GRANDMOTHER. Ever since you can remember, has she had a way of picking the one gift your heart was set on? Give her the gift *her* heart is set on—a beautiful Hamilton. "Diamond set" Hamiltons, such as the one below, are priced from **$120** to **$5,000.**

SON. Is he making good in his first job? Show him how proud you are by putting a good-looking Hamilton in his stocking. Below (left), the Myron—17 jewels, 10K gold-filled case . . . **$55.** Below (right), the Martin—17 jewels, 10K gold-filled case . . . . . . **$52.25.**

The watches below were picked to suggest Hamilton's variety of styles and prices. See your jeweler for other appropriate Hamilton gift watches from **$52.25** *up. Prices include Fed. Tax.*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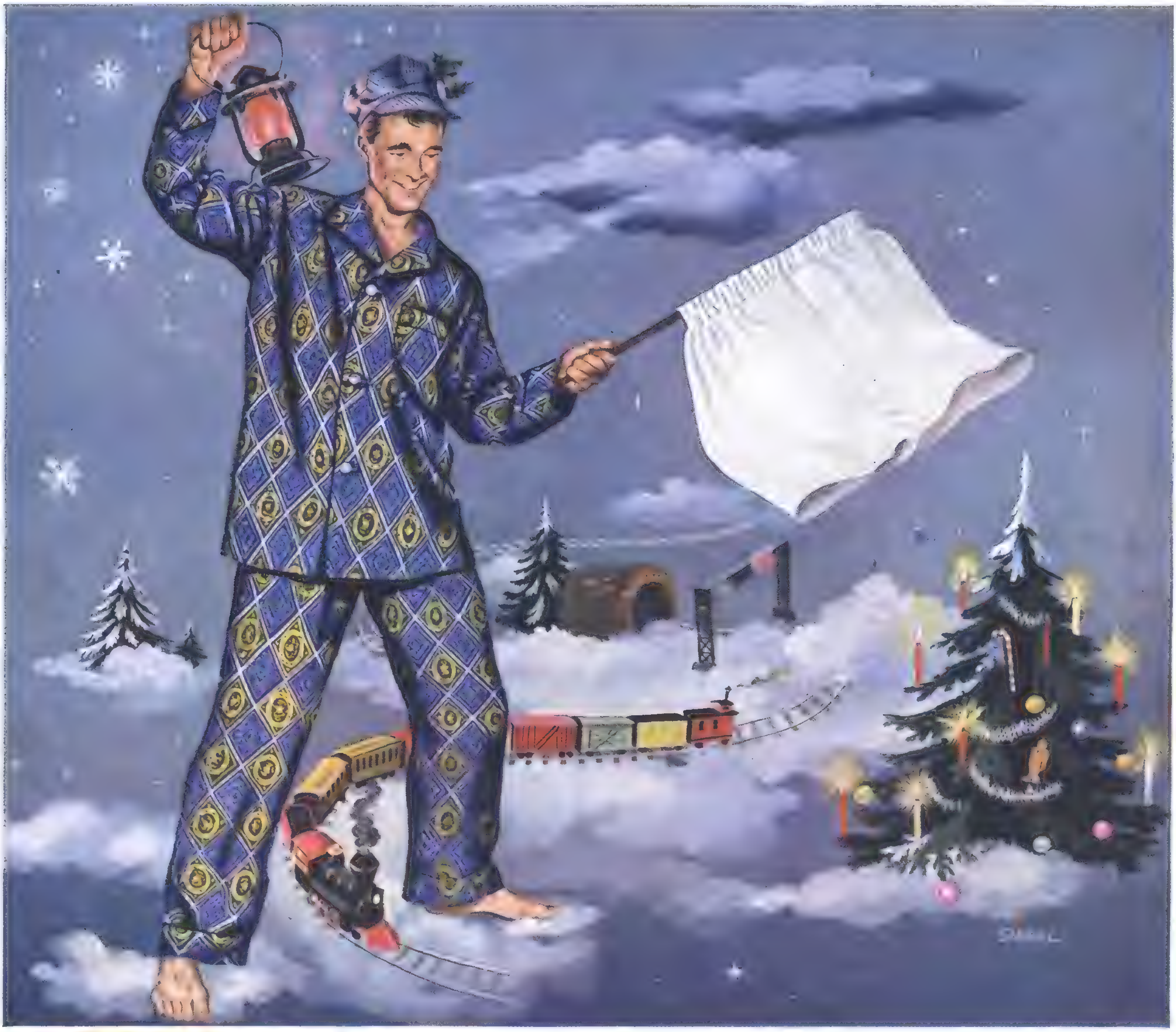
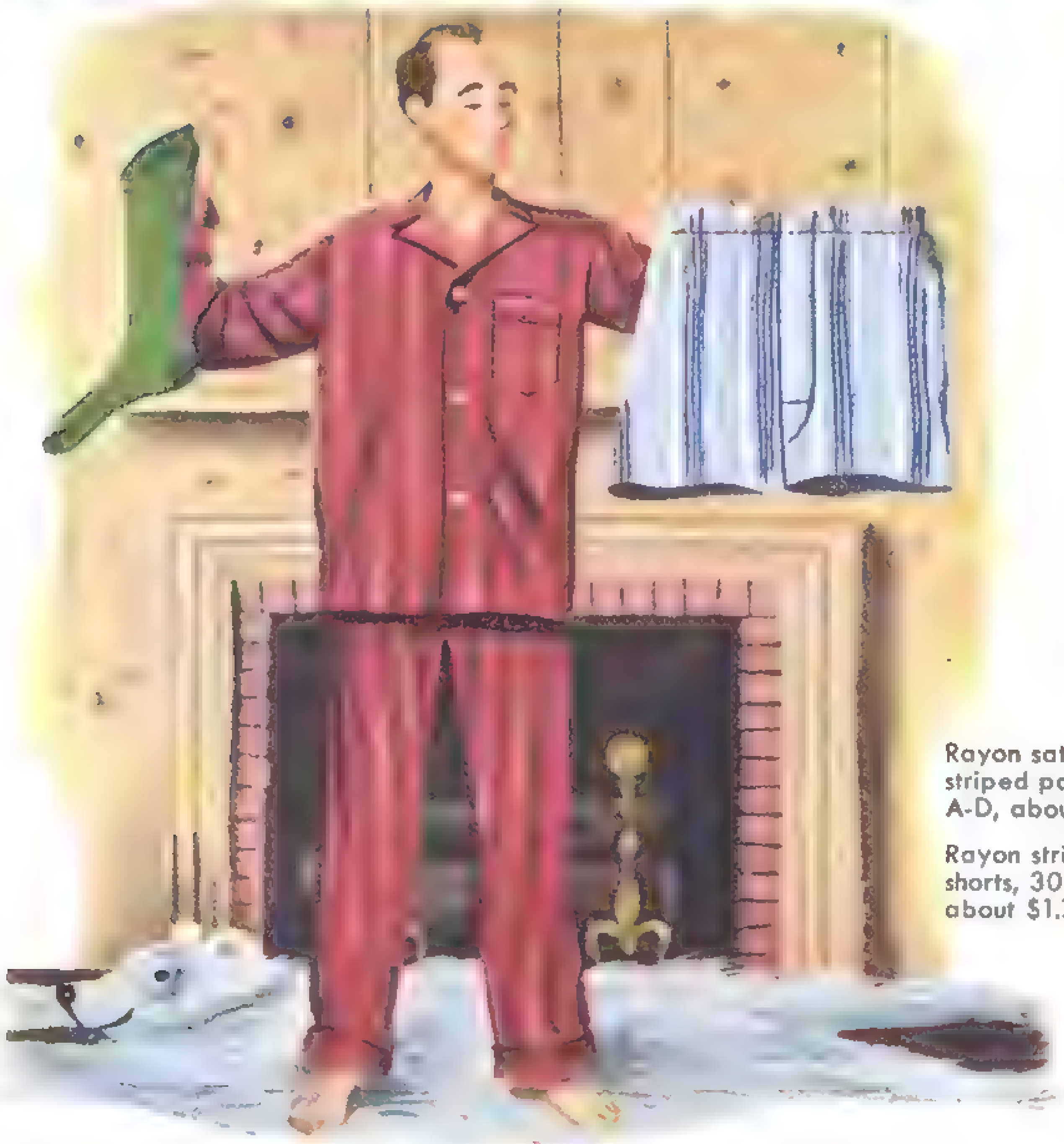


Figured rayon pajamas, A-D, about $10. • Rayon shorts, 30-44, about $1.75



Rayon satin striped pajamas, A-D, about $7

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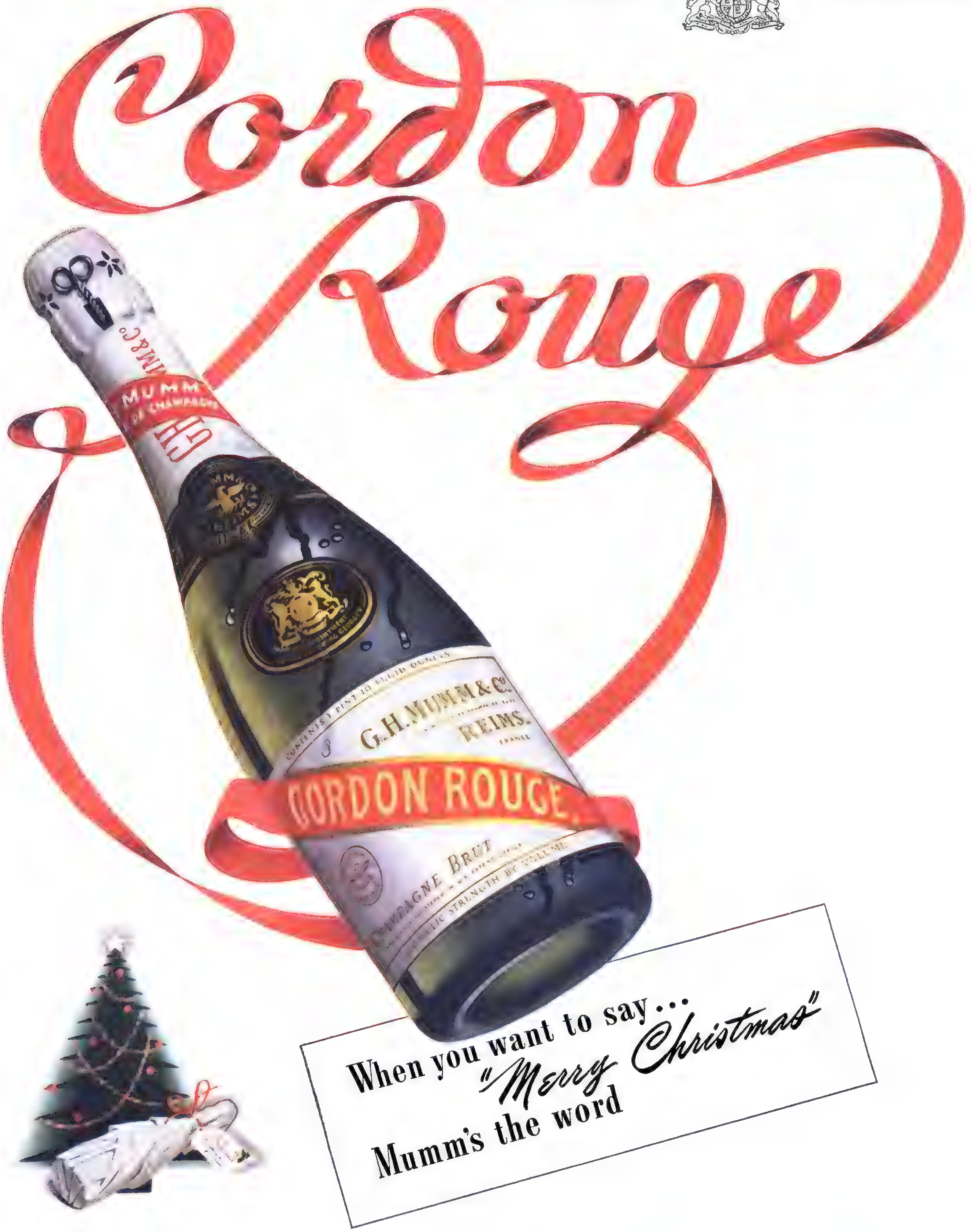
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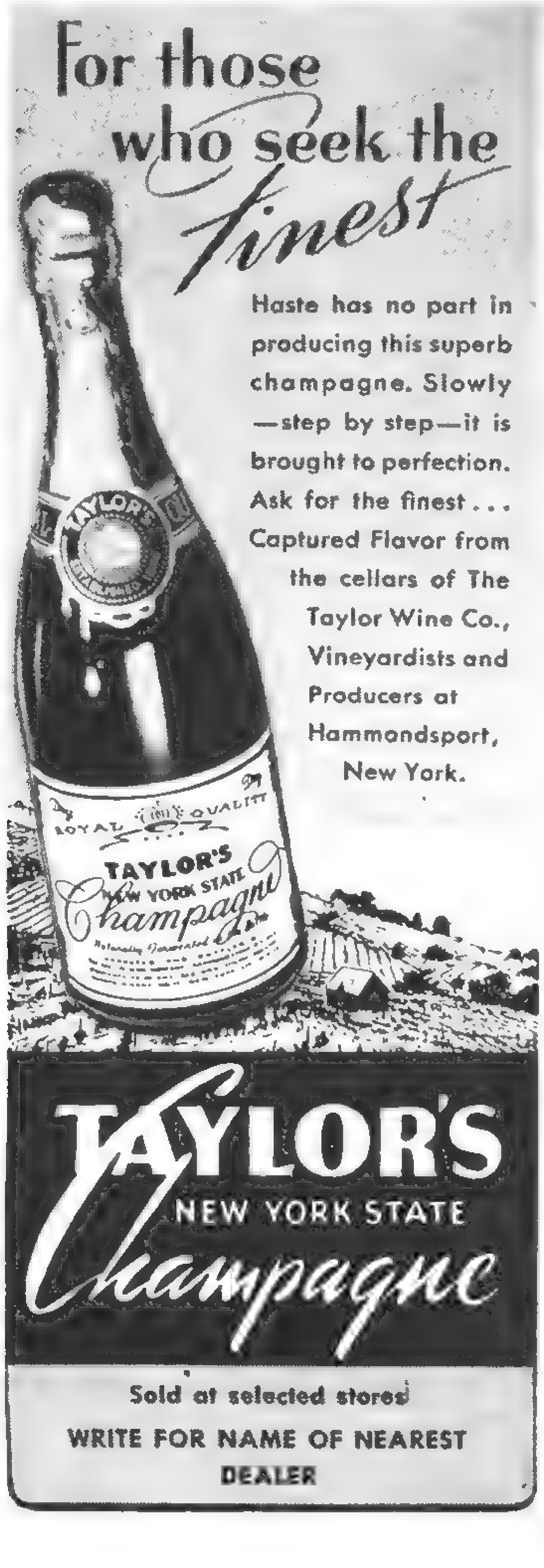
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Painting the Town with Esquire

HOT MUSIC lovers are gravitating to the Hickory House on West 52nd where the Abe Most Quartet and Jimmie Harris' piano make fine listening while you deal with one of the house's excellent steaks. Dixieland specialists still like Eddie Condon's in the Village, where Wild Bill Davison, Georg Brunis, Gene Schroeder, George Wettling and company (with outside talent sitting in on Tuesdays), give out with some of the rarest jazz in Manhattan. Nicks, also in the Village, is still a magnet for the younger music-loving crowd, while Swing Street (the West end of 52nd to the Sixth Avenue intersection) still boasts the Onyx, the Famous Door, the Three Deuces and the Downbeat where all the hot music men foregather sooner or later, probably after the one a.m. session at Ryan's. There's dancing at Nick's, but the other spots are strictly for listening. Go late.

FOR DANCING after midnight, most sophisticates still like the Stork Club, Larue's, El Morocco or Monte Carlo, while the very social crowd clings to the St. Regis, the Pierre or the Plaza. But there's fine dancing music, too, at the Waldorf, the Pennsylvania, the St. Moritz and the Savoy Plaza. Good spots—on the smaller side—are the Place Elegante (after 9 pm), the Coq Rouge or the Crest Room. *ESQUIREcommended!*

PHILADELPHIA'S NIGHT LIFE is largely the business of Frankie Palumbo, who owns and operates on a fairly lavish scale the six top night clubs of the city. Palumbo's particular pride is his celebrated "CR Club" (Circulo Recreativo), for members only, which is open even on Sundays and usually 'til dawn. Features a small gymnasium on the top floor, complete with a steam-room and masseur and trainers, a sleek private dining room for banquet parties, and the big room and bar below where there is continuous dance music. Cuisine, liquor and décor compare favorably with Chicago's celebrated Pump Room, and the service is equally splendid. Smart men-about-town in Philly try to contrive, somehow, anyhow, to join the CR Club, and a great many of them do. It's a must if you can make it.

THE CLICK is the town's big night club, a vast, terraced low-ceilinged room where you're likely to find any of the large name bands—and most of the Philadelphia younger set. This is strictly Philadelphia's idea of Hollywood, with subdued indirect lighting, fabulous bars, a revolving stage and alternating orchestras instructed to keep it loud and constant. They do. Older patrons frequently flee to Ciro's, also a Palumbo enterprise, where there is continuous entertainment and dancing to two smaller bands in the big downstairs room and really clever vocalizing by a zany, amusing quartet from a stage back of the big bar on street level. *ESQUIREcommended!*

FIRE RAZED Philadelphia's celebrated old Pen and Pencil Club last Winter and the new quarters somehow don't measure up to the old. But it remains the town's newspaper hangout and a rendezvous for the advertising, radio and theatre crowd and still a fairly comfortable spot for a late drink—although the fluorescent lighting is a bit disconcerting. The Twenty-One Club features dancing and occasional entertainment in a tasteful downstairs room. The downbeat occasionally snares some really topflight musicians and this upstairs joint pulls in the hot jazz fans from all the town.

FRANKIE BRADLEY'S excellent restaurant remains headquarters for showfolk and, since Philadelphia is a major tryout town for all Broadway shows, you're likely to find your favorite actors dining here after theatre or lunching before a matinee. Autographed pictures line the walls attesting to the excellence of the food and theatre people's affection for little Frankie Bradley who knows practically everybody in show business. Finest place in town for an after-midnight supper. The Warwick remains the favorite hostelry for stage stars during their Philadelphia appearances and this hotel's food and service are splendid as ever.

For information about any specific hotel, restaurant or night club, write "Esquire-about-town," 366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

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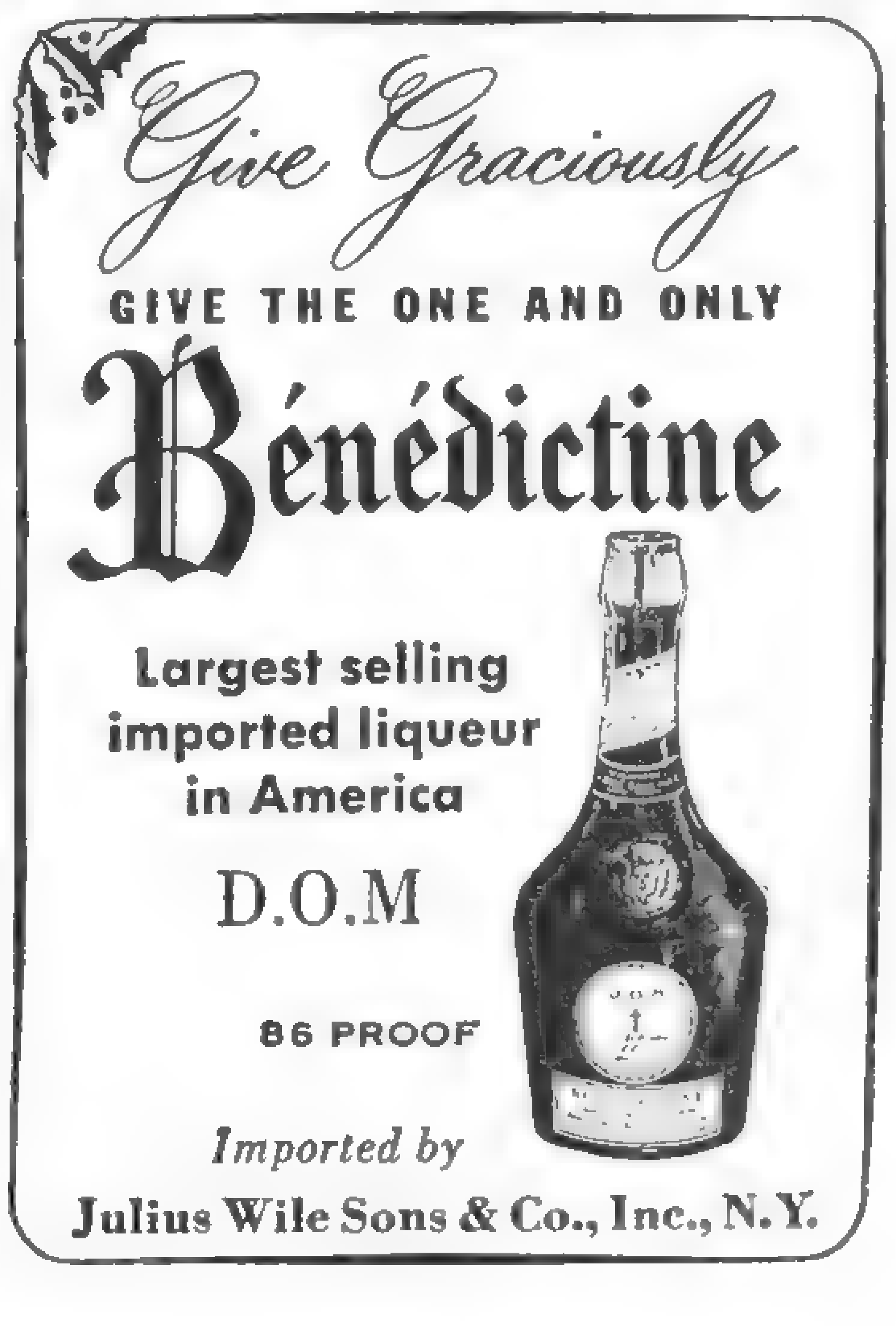
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Painting the Town

(Editor's note: New York night clubs and supper clubs, especially the smaller, West-side places, have a way of switching entertainment suddenly, so it's best to check last minute if you're looking for something in particular. Food, drink and atmosphere remain pretty constant.)

THIS IS THE SEASON when lucky New Yorker's pack golf clubs, swim suits and fishing tackle (or skis, cardigans and skates) and head south or north to avoid the same old Manhattan which is the mid-Winter mecca of the out-of-towners. So while Pinehurst, Miami Beach, Key West, Sun Valley and the Laurentians drain off their quota of Manhattan migrants, tens of thousands (roughly ten thousand per day) of eager people are converging on New York for their annual whirl of the big town's hotels, restaurants, theatres and night clubs, supper clubs and bars. New faces line the ringsides at the big and brassy night clubs; new accents order the food and wine, and crisp new money goes into the cash registers—but it's the same old New York, better, one suspects, than the old year's.

YOU CAN'T AFFORD, of course, to miss Toots Shor's busy joint (as it is known to the customers), and where the regular customers themselves — the Broadway-Hollywood fight crowd, horse players, sports writers, actors and politicos—are known affectionately as crumbbums to ham-handed, big-hearted Toots. Really good food and excellent mixed drinks from some of the best barmen in town. Crosby and Sinatra practically *live* here, as do their song- and gag-writers. Tip: phone ahead for reservations and don't even go near the joint weekends unless you're an established crumbbum.

THAT SLAVIC TOUCH is available, too, at Broadway's Russian Skazka where Karavieff, who once was Pavlowa's partner, sparkplugs a gaudy show which includes Marusia Sava, a contralto beauty, Ilya Spivack, a White Russian baritone, Sasha and Sonya, a whirlwind dance team, and Homo Frye, a concert mandolinist. Music for dinner and dancing is provided by Kostya Poliansky and a balalaika ensemble. Good fun if you go late, say midnight show time which is likely as not to be around one a.m. Better dine elsewhere unless you're in the mood for boeuf Stroganoff and vodka, although the cellar and kitchen are adequate for simpler tastes. "Skazka" is Russian for "fairy tale," and the riotous murals almost catch the atmosphere. They were done, by the way, by an Irishman named O'Shaughnessy.

MORE AUTHENTIC RUSSIAN music in the old Balkan manner is reachable, too, at the Golden Fiddle just off Broadway in the middle Seventies. Go late. Edo Ljubich and Mirko Mirkovich, two Yugoslav refugees from Belgrade, provide some of the finest singing and the most superb guitar you're likely to find anywhere in New York. The band's classically Balkan, even to a genuine Turkish cymbalom — you know, that instrument that looks like a stripped-down baby grand piano which is played with wire beaters. *ESQUIREcommended!*

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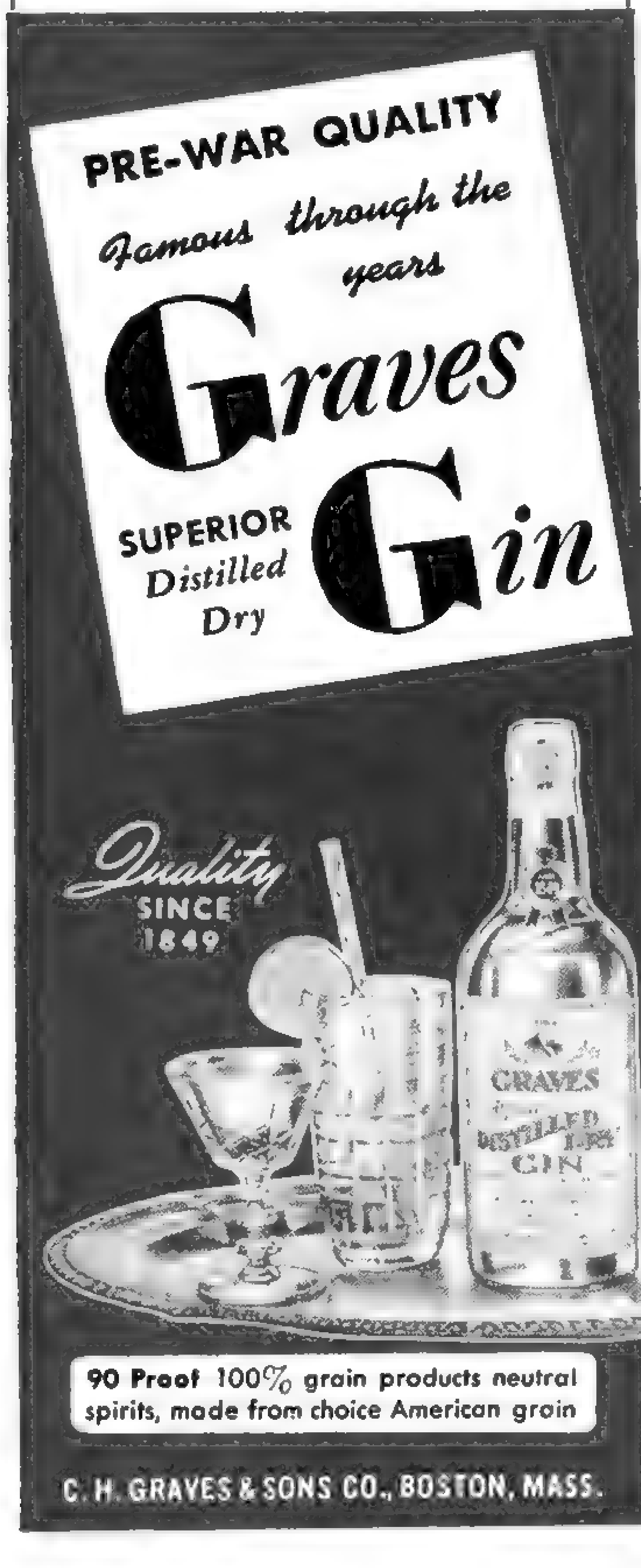
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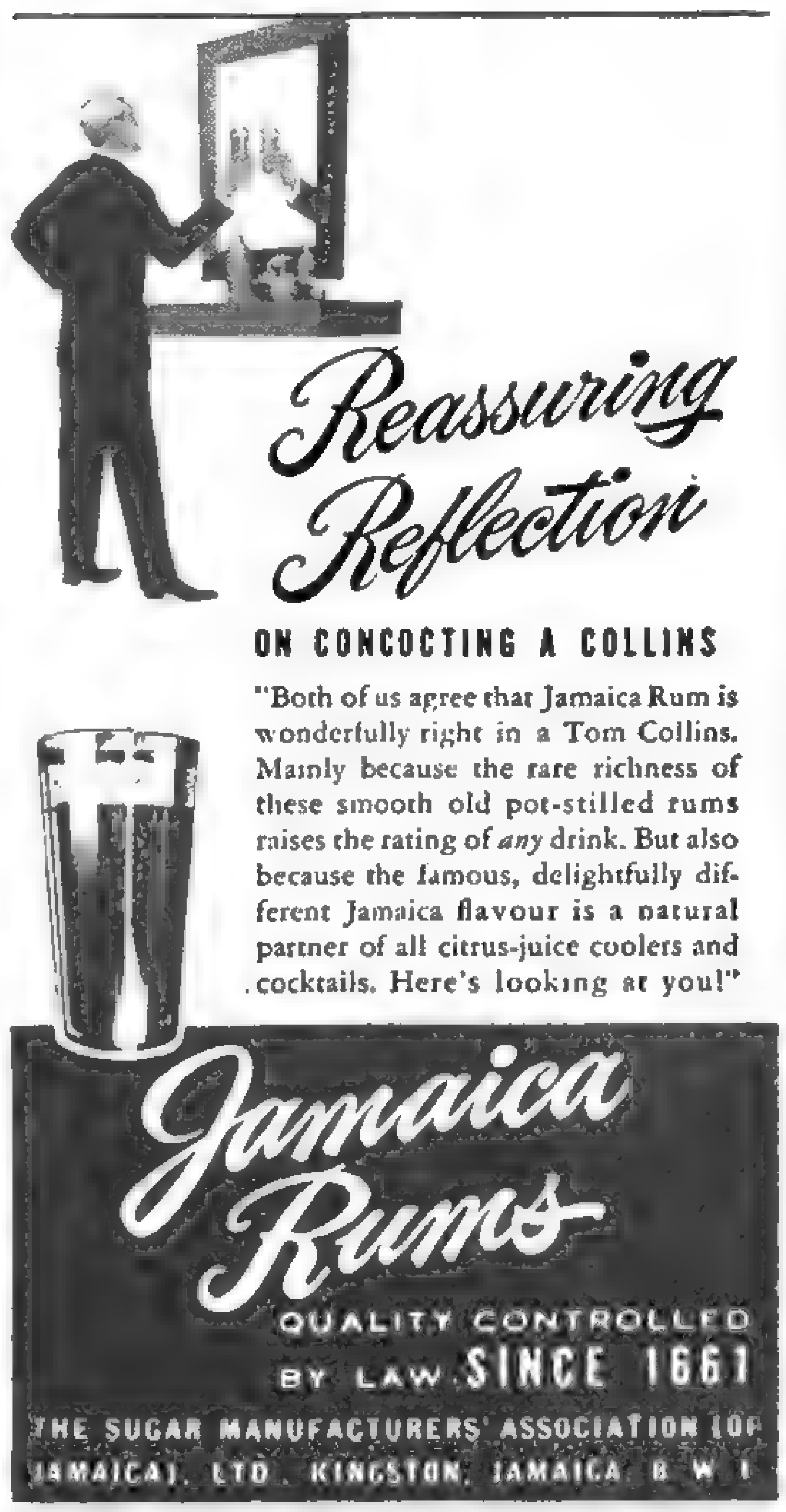
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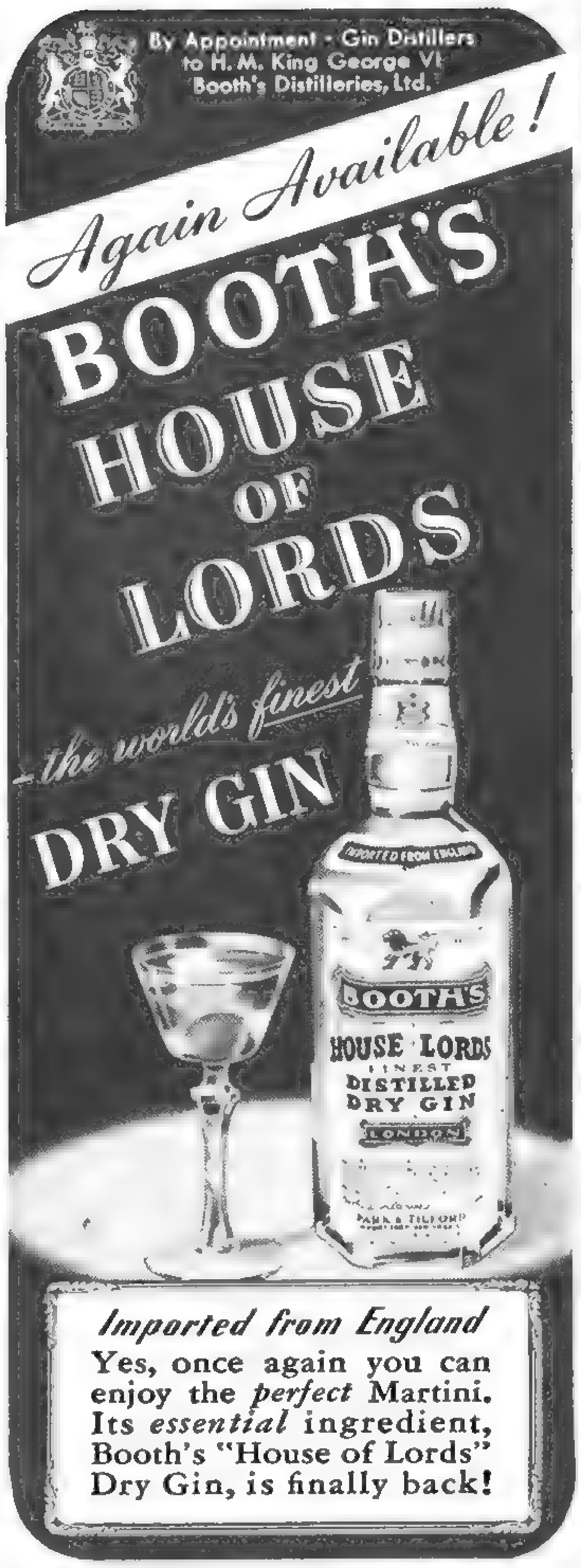
with Esquire

ONE SPECIAL TARGET for hinterlanders in New York is Zimmerman's Hungaria, a big colorful cafe-restaurant just off Broadway in the West Forties. Janczi Makula, a Brooklyn-born Gypsy, heads up the floor show with his educated violin. Janczi (pronounced "Yantsi"), pretends direct descent—and it seems reasonably credible — from a long line of Hungarian Gypsy kings, and has played in all the major Continental cafes of pre-war Eastern Europe as well as the '46 season in Mexico City's celebrated Fonda Santa Anita. Aficionados of Gypsy music like especially Janczi's treatment of Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody #2," Rachmaninoff's "Prelude" and the Roumanian specialty, "The Nightingale." Zimmerman's menu is replete with Balkan specialties, including, of course, chicken paprikash, paprika turkey wings and turkey giblets, Hungarian. The cellar's excellent, abounding in fine imported wines and liquors, prewar champagnes, including Mumm's Cordon Rouge, Piper Heidsick, '28 and Pommery & Greno — but many of the Hungaria's Balkan clientele prefer their native *spritzer*, using Orvieto Italian white wine, very dry, with ice and soda. *ESQUIREcommended!*

NEW ORLEANS' celebrated patio restaurants still draw the real gourmets hellbent for genuine Creole cocking, fine wines, leisurely Southern service and that indefinable atmosphere known only to this grand old delta city and its annual Winter visitors from everywhere. N'Awlins (or Noorleens, if you like) is, as everybody knows, the home of Antoine's and Oysters Rockefeller, but your first-time vacationer heading this way should know about: *Patio Royal*, at 417 Royal Street, one of the finest old Spanish-style restaurants in the whole southland, boasting peerless Creole cooking, delightful service on the flagstone amber-lighted court and a wine and liqueur list to meet any taste . . . *The Court of the Two Sisters*, founded circa 1832 by Zenon Cavelier who was president of the Banque d'Orleans — a must for any seeker after atmosphere and typical New Orleans fare. There's an old splashing fountain, weeping willows and a great grille enclosing the courtyard from Royal Street—nearly three stories high . . . Then there's the *Green Shutter* restaurant, founded in 1796 on the site of the old slave quarters, a real find if you're looking for local color and superb food and drink . . . *Broussard's Restaurant* is a favorite with oldtime visitors—since the days of the river boats, wide-open gambling, high livin' and lovin, Suh, in the tradition of the Mississippi. *ESQUIRE-commended!*

AMONG MIAMI BEACH hotels, the Roney Plaza is still lengths in front, followed by the Versailles, the Martinique, the Cadillac and the Sea Isle. Book now—or you'll find nothing available until March or April. Tip: better make return travel reservations well in advance, too. Crush will be heavy as ever.

For information about any specific hotel, restaurant or night club, write "Esquire-about-town," 366 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y.



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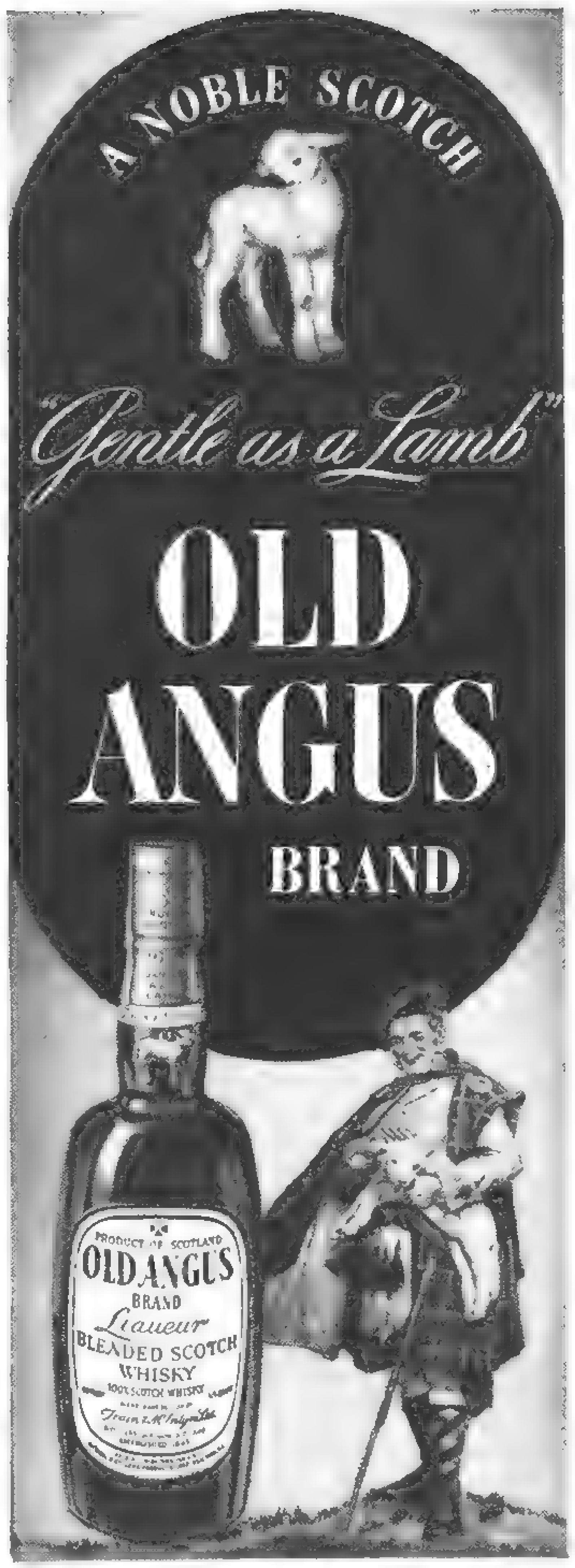

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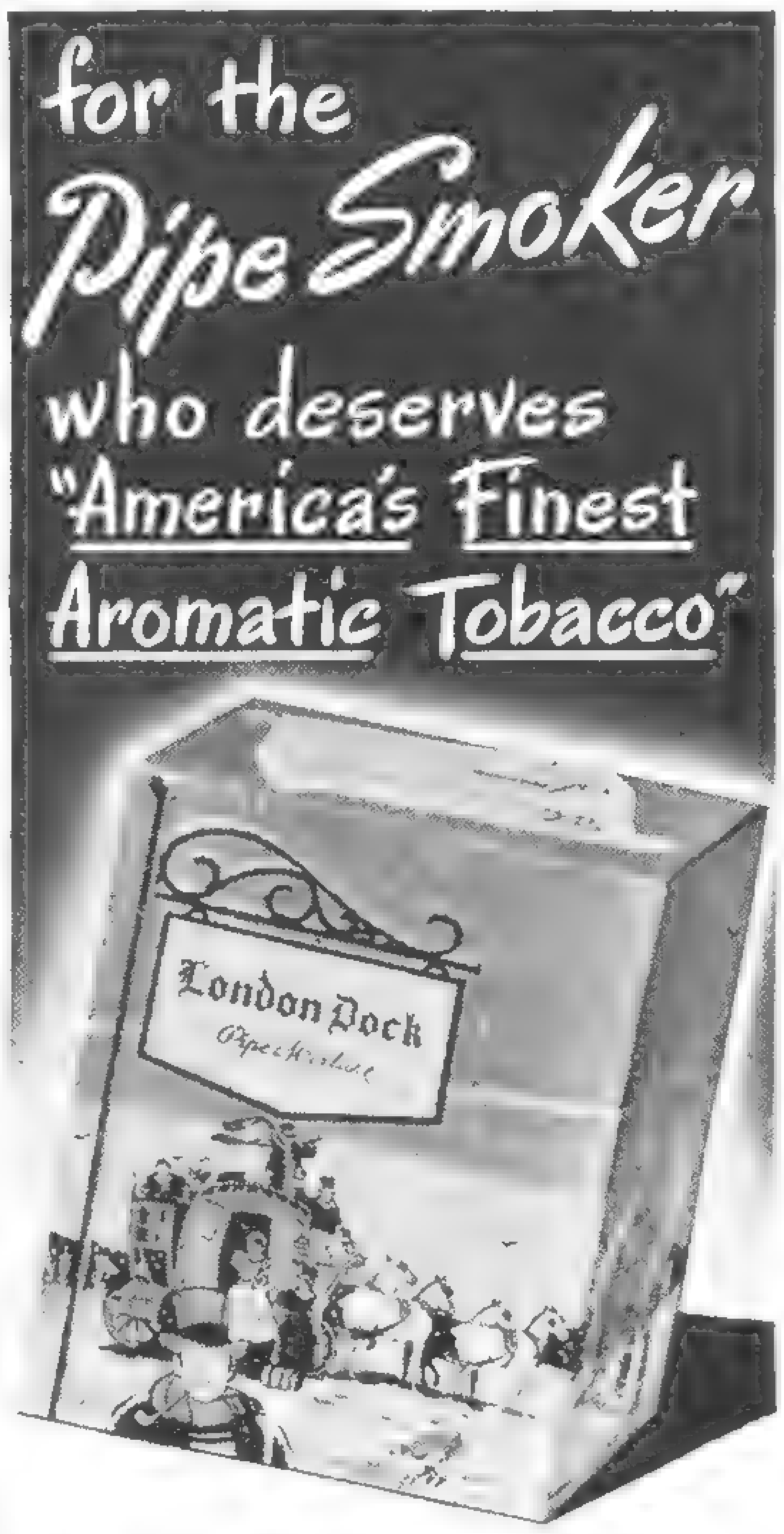

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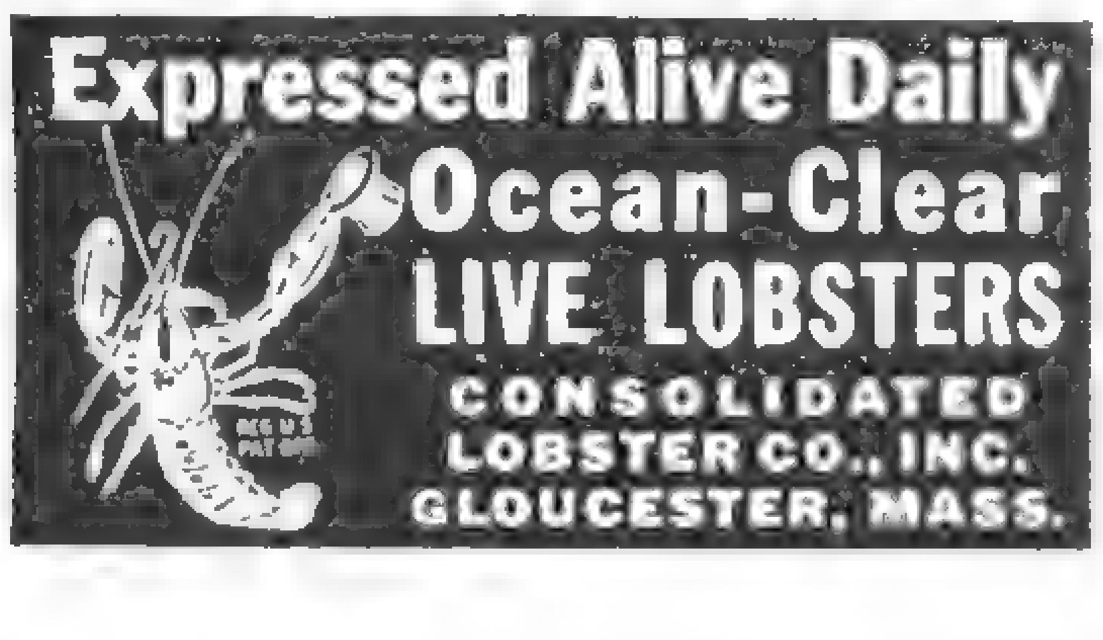

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Backstage with Esquire

Henry Kane

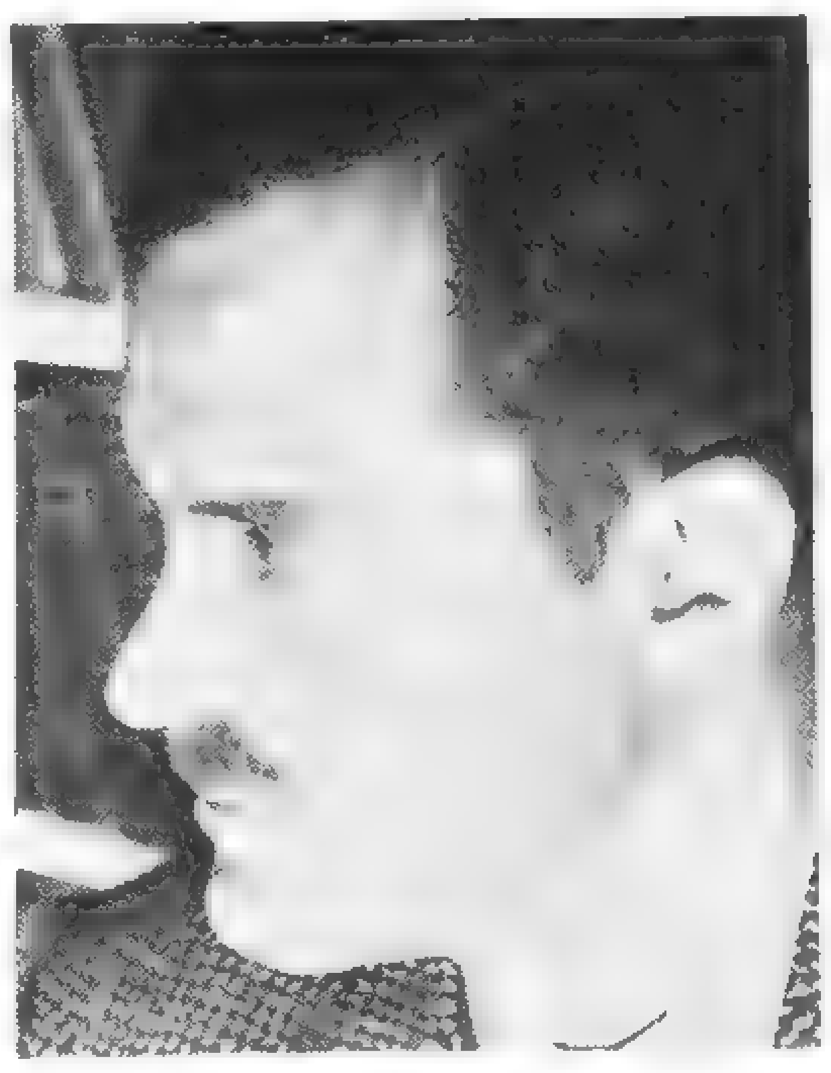
Since we introduced you to HENRY KANE in our February, 1947, issue, the creator of Pete Chambers has been spreading himself around in fine style. He served a stint in Hollywood, placed two short stories in the *Saturday Evening Post*, completed *Armchair in Hell*, our feature fiction attraction this month, and presently is dickering with radiomen who would like to get Pete on the air. While all this was going on, he kept shoveling short mysteries at Esquire. His record: five passes, five completions. It was a very busy year for Henry and his first as a professional writer. His extracurricular activities were equally varied and successful, for Henry plays as hard as he works—he can pub-crawl all night, sleep three hours and show up at his 52nd Street studio on schedule for a hard day's work figuring out what his alter ego, Pete Chambers, will do next.

BENJAMIN SIEGEL, author of *The Good Arrest*, which you will find on page 76, describes himself as a New Yorker by taste, inclination, education and birth. Solely interested in writing at the moment, he seems undisturbed by the fact that he never won a contest, has no garden, and doesn't own a dog.

Edward Galloway

After studying mining at the University of California, EDWARD GALLOWAY went to South America to look for gold. After two years and no gold he tried commercial fishing in Europe. He recalls: "I made a thousand dollars in three hours once during the shark-liver excitement and then the engine broke down. I bought a new one with the money and then the season was over. I went to Santa Barbara in '42 for sharks and albacore around the channel islands, but the net boats had caught all the sharks and my underwater exhaust scared the albacore away. During the seven years I had the boat the only money I made from fishing was from selling *Albacore Fisherman* (presented on page 87) to Esquire."

MATT TAYLOR, who contributed *This One Was Perfect* to this issue of Esquire, lives in Rye, in Westchester County, New York, and claims to know all sorts of odd characters, including a wife and three children. He has written more than a hundred fifty stories for various publications, as well as some radio scripts, and has served time in Hollywood. Also he has co-authored two "notable flops" which appeared on the Broadway stage.



John Woodburn

JOHN WOODBURN, who was educated at Lawrenceville and Princeton, for the past ten years has been an editor with several New York book publishers, eventually winding up with Henry Holt. His current story, *The Better Part of Valor*, was rejected by this publication some ten years ago. One morning he found the manuscript among his souvenirs, revised it and submitted it again. A few days later he received two letters—one from Esquire and the other from the U. S. Treasury. He was afraid to open the envelopes, expecting to find a letter of rejection and a notice of underpayment of income tax. It was his lucky day. There were two checks: one was in payment for the story, the other was a refund on his tax.

EDWARD RADIN, ex-reporter and author of crime stories, declares: "Every time I read an autobiography of a reformed newspaperman, I wonder what I was doing during my days on the police beat. Although I had a nodding acquaintance with several killers, none of them ever took me for a ride nor roused me in the middle of the morning to unburden their souls. However, once a red-hot suspect ambled over to me in a courtroom and ordered me not to publish his correct address, since he didn't want to embarrass a sister whose home he shared. I replied that he could not intimidate the press and added piously that he should have thought of his sister before the crime. Later, when the killer was freed, he threw me a leer as he left the court. I smiled back, since he was manacled to a probation officer, charged with violating his parole. Three days after his release, detectives uncovered the largest underworld arsenal in the history of New York. Their prisoners included my friend, in whose pocket was a slip of paper mentioning my name. He probably wanted to drop me a note."

Samson Raphaelson

Probably everyone knows that SAMSON RAPHAELSON is the playwright and screen writer who has delighted audiences with such memorial hits as *Skylark*, *The Jazz Singer*, *Accent on Youth*, and *The Shop Around the Corner*. However, it may be news to some of you that he was once an English instructor at the University of Illinois, his alma mater; that one of his short stories was selected by Martha Foley for inclusion in *Best American Short Stories, 1947*; that his new play is slated for early Broadway production and that he wrote *The Lady in Ermine*, a Fox picture starring Rex Harrison.

J. W. FLEMING (*According to Hoyle*, page 94) lives in Buffalo, where he was born and bred. He says: "I vainly pursued a B. A. degree at Cornell, the University of Buffalo and Princeton. Then via farm, factory office and lake boat (one trip as ordinary seaman on a package freighter), I became a reporter on the now defunct Buffalo *Evening Post* and later on the Buffalo *Evening News*. I left the latter to do trade-press writing from which I entered my present work of general feature writing as a free-lance."

Martin Beaver

Argentine-born of British parents, MARTIN BEAVER is thirty-two, single; lives in Buenos Aires; and describes himself as an accountant and railwayman by profession, but a writer by preference. He was educated in Argentina and in England (College of Preceptors). He has written widely on economic matters, and says: "Since there is little outlet for writing in English down this leg-end of the continent, I have recently turned to exporting articles and fiction."

BARNEY NAGLER (*The Baltimore Story*, page 68) gives us these highlights: "When you're born in Brooklyn, you've got loads to overcome. Have been working at it for thirty-four years . . . at school, college . . . and as a newspaper copy reader and, more recently, as a sports writer with emphasis on boxing. In addition, have written for most national magazines, including *Coronet*, and do the words for Bill Stern's Colgate Sports Newsreel, a National Broadcasting Company show. In my spare time, there's the business of playing husband to a frau and father to a ten-year-old, Robert."

Paul Fielding

PAUL FIELDING, whose first short story, *The Envelope*, we are happy to introduce, is managing director of Stage, Incorporated, the Cincinnati Civic Theatre. He was born in India where his British parents were living at the time, and describes his peripatetic career as follows: "At the end of my second year, I was sent down from Cambridge, where I had been discovered hanging by my coattails from the spikes of Jesus College after a particularly sultry tango exhibition at a local boîte. My law studies having come to naught, I became a motion-picture actor in Berlin, France, England and Hollywood, then progressed to the theatre, to writing plays and working for M-G-M studios as a story analyst. In 1942 I received my American citizenship papers coincidentally with an invitation to join the Armed Forces. After two years in the South Pacific I was returned to the States, incapacitated, and resumed my acting and playwriting."

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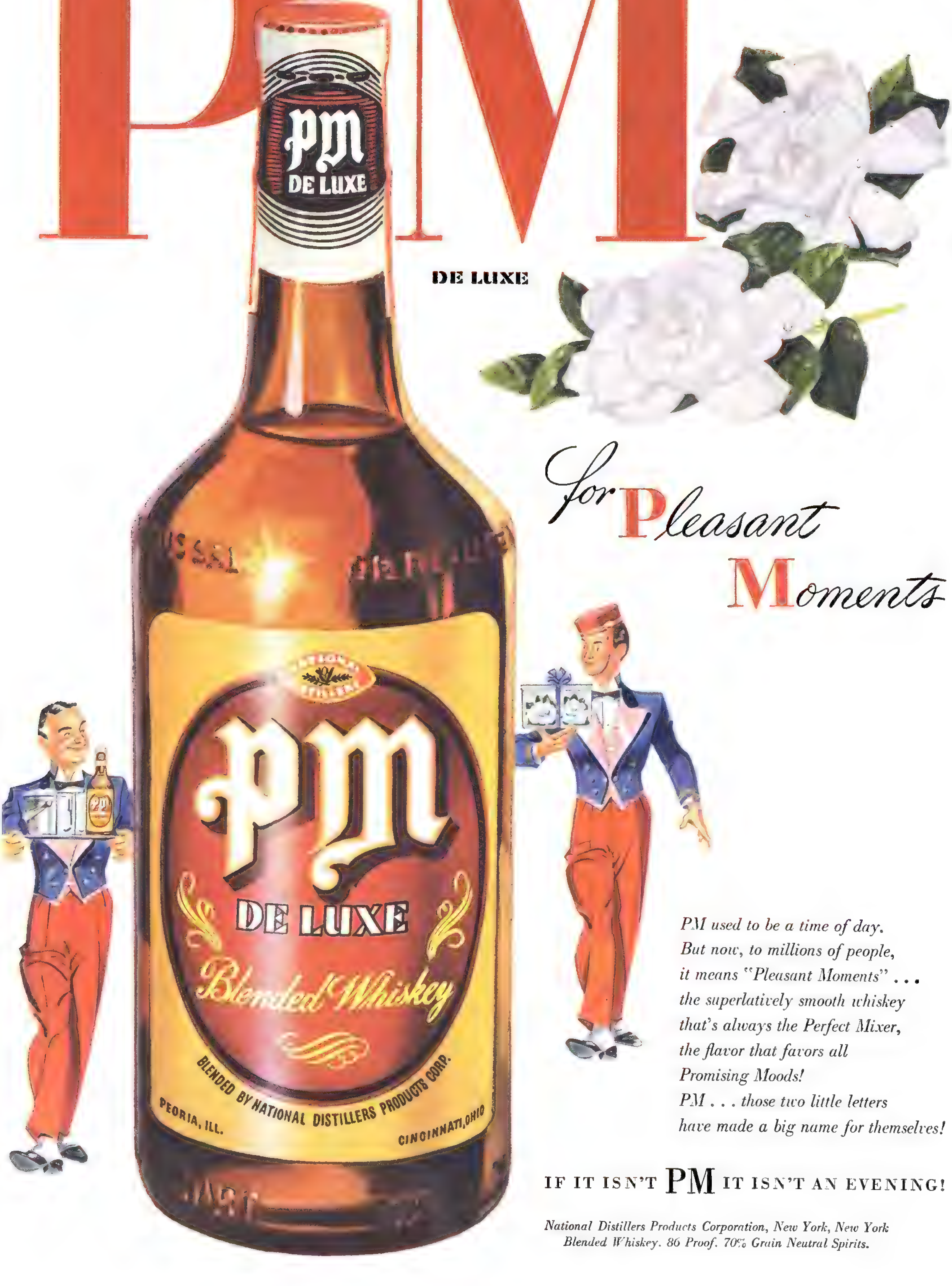
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THIS MAN'S WORLD:

Ordeal by Fire

Lament for four steaks, ode to a circus queen, and thematic notes on fan dancers

by PAUL GALLICO

FAULKNER

There must be a happier ending to a tussle with an outdoor barbecue, or steak-broiling outfit, than I was able to achieve recently down on the farm where I had my first encounter with this form of torture. Hundreds of people use these contraptions successfully, I am told, and perhaps my experience was unique; also, being a novice, I may have overlooked one or two little tricks. But then, as far as I was concerned, it was all pioneering, Hardware & Silverware, Inc., the manufacturers, having included no directions whatsoever, an omission I mean to have a word with them about at some later date when my hands have recovered sufficiently from trying to operate their outdoor charcoal broiler. As you may have surmised from the odd, jerky style, or lack of style, of this article, I am dictating it.

It all began when a near and loving relative wished to fulfill a longfelt heart's desire of mine and presented me with a portable outdoor charcoal broiler. There she was, one week end when I arrived at the farm, the huge cardboard carton standing outside on the porch because it was too big to go through the door. The label said that it came from Hardware & Silverware in New York.

Yup, there she was boys, solid cast iron and painted a glossy black when she came out of the box, except that it didn't look like a charcoal broiler, but more like one of those minipianos you see on nightclub floors. The main body of the contraption stood on four legs, two of them on casters, yawning cavernously. There was not the slightest clue as to where or how to attach some seven accompanying pieces of ironmongery to this clavier of cookery, not so much as a slip of paper or a ghost of a direction.

Lacking the mechanical mind, I am in sufficient trouble when faced with a folder directing me to fasten parts "A" and "B" together with screw "C." The mysterious and complete silence of Hardware & Silverware on the subject of their cooker frustrated me completely. Either they didn't care, or there were things connected with the gadget they'd rather I didn't ever know. I am inclined to the latter. In its disassembled state the cooker wasn't going to hurt anyone, and filled with flower pots or creeping plants would make a rather pleasant outdoor decoration. Properly put together and ready for use, it was a lethal device only a few degrees less potent and dangerous than the atom bomb. By comparison the Molotov cocktail was a harmless glowworm. It was obvious that Hardware & Silverware preferred it to be used as an ornament and didn't wish to start anything.

However, having acquired by inheritance, from the sad demise of a wealthy uncle, four succulent steaks, and having company over the week end, I wished to charcoal broil, as every man at some time in his life, and such was my good right too. Eventually I had to telephone to Hardware for a long-distance lesson in assembly. The man there was diffident and vague. He said: "I'm really surprised. You know it's quite simple to put together. Everything has a place."

I made the obvious retort that it might be simple for some, but not for me, and learned to my surprise that what I thought was the coal box was the plate warmer, what seemed to be a poker was a turning spit and that a menacing looking triangular bit with perforations was nothing more exciting than a shelf.

By dint of running back and forth from the telephone to the barbecue, I did get it put together. Instead of the keyboard of the piano, there were two iron grills, one above the other with a drip pan underneath. The man said you built your fire on the grill underneath and broiled on the one on top. For just one moment his voice, far on the other end of the copper strand, waxed nostalgic as he said, "You roast your corn or mickeys underneath. The hot ashes from the charcoal drop down and make a kind of a bed for roasting. There's really nothing to it. Just start the charcoal burning with a bit of paper. When the flame dies out of the charcoal and it glows, you begin your broiling. You won't have any trouble." By this time my imagination was fired and I failed to notice the odd note in his farewell when he wished me luck before he hung up. Oh my beloved H. &. S., I suppose you tried to warn me.

Perhaps a time chronology is the best way of uncovering for you the awful details of Mein Kampf mit der barbecue.

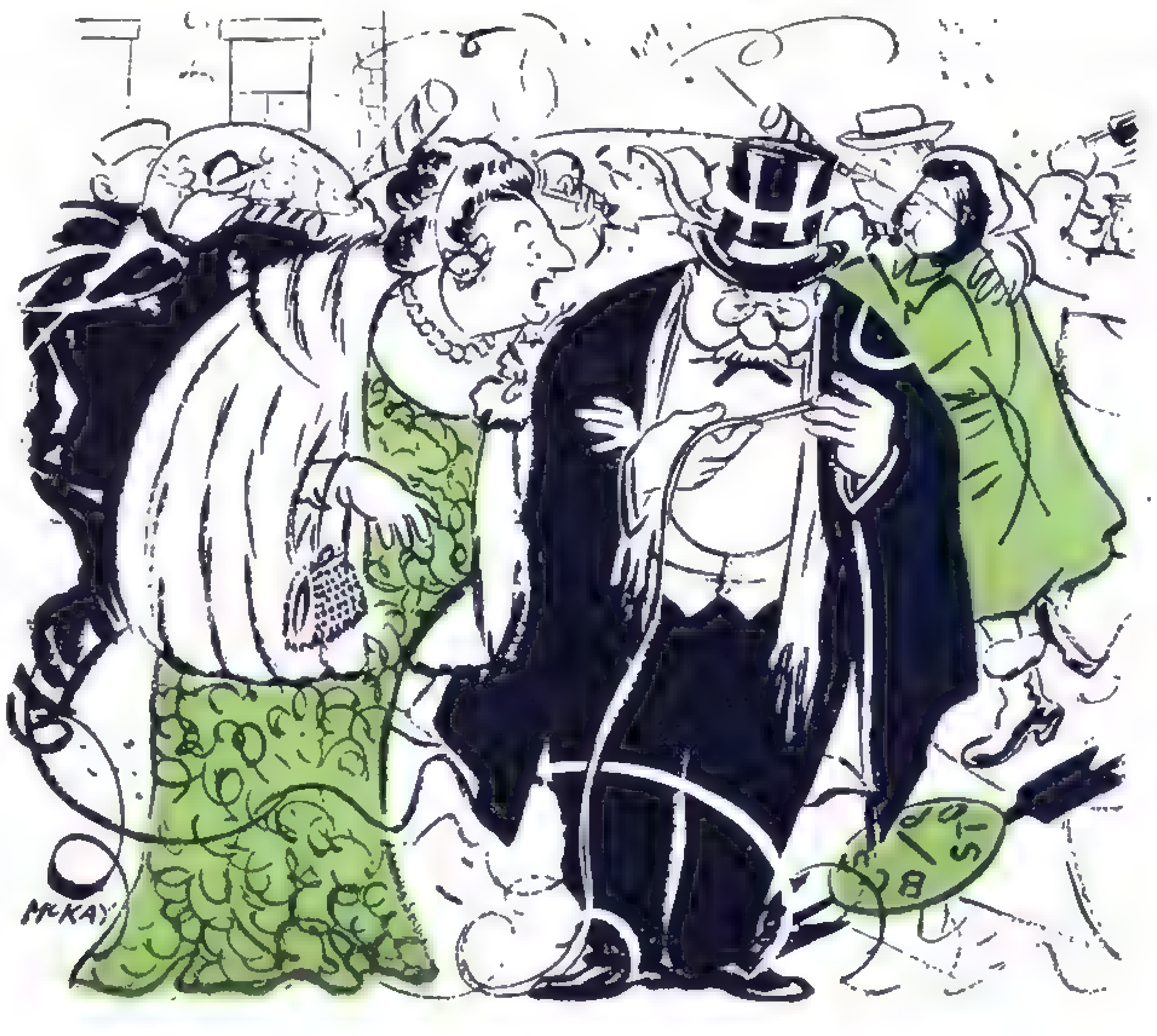
6:45 p.m. We all had a little drink. Dinner scheduled for 7:30. Menu, charcoal-broiled T-bone steaks, corn, fresh from my cornfield, roasted in the husks. I donned apron and white gloves. Crumpled up newspapers on lower grill, poured charcoal from pound paper bag on it. Set fire to paper.

6:50 p.m. Paper burned and went out. Charcoal all fell through grill onto drip pan below. Not a spark. Ashes and half-burnt newspaper floating about on porch. Advice from wife and guests: Use more paper. Use less paper. You've got to use kindling. Don't use kindling. Blow on it. Pour some lighter fluid over the charcoal. Use bigger lumps of charcoal. Spread the charcoal out so the air can get at it. Keep the charcoal together in a little mound until it catches, *then* spread it. Do *something*, we're getting hungry.

7:00 p.m. Another little drink. New fire laid. More paper, more charcoal. Paper fired. Blowing and fanning. Fanning released large chunks of burning newspaper that floated away and started grass fire in neighborhood of haybarn. All hands turned to and fought grass fire.

7:20 p.m. Grass fire out. Also fire in charcoal broiler. Not a spark. Wife ventures: "Wouldn't it be better maybe this first time if I made the steaks in the oven broiler . . ." Tight-lipped I determined to

(*Continued on page 168*)



"Can't you forget that old stock market for a while?"

When you owe your life to a man, do you repay him by making love to his wife?

The Better Part of Valor

by JOHN WOODBURN

SAM THAL

I HAD been spraying trees for a man named Hartung, sweating at the pump all through the warm spring afternoon. Around five-thirty we finished the upper orchard and I asked Hartung, who was handling the sprayer, if there was any water near by deep enough to swim in.

"There's the Chariton River," he said, smiling. "I guess you'll find it deep enough. It's a half mile or a little better from here, in line with that big wineglass elm. You go ahead and get your swim, and we'll leave the sprayer right here tonight and start in on the lower orchard in the morning."

I cut through the lower orchard and across the highway, hurrying to reach the cool water. My arms, which had felt like paper from the unaccustomed pumping at the sprayer, were getting their strength back slowly, and I walked with my head thrown back, breathing in the fresh scent of young clover and new-turned earth. I saw a man plowing with a team, waved my hand and yelled, "Hi there!" out of pure good will and he waved back at me. I liked the way those bays threw their weight into the collar, as an honest team will do, and the way the man bore down on the plow handles. You could tell the furrow would be straight and deep, and that the last one would be as clean as the first. A flock of birds came over, flying high in a ragged V, and I picked a stone from the ground and sent it after them, just to try my arm.

A little farther on I crossed a dirt road and just beyond it, edged with drooping willows, I found my river. It widened below me to a sizable stretch of water, but from where I stood I could have thrown a stone across it, tired as my arms were. I had my shirt off in no time, but when it came to my dungarees I decided that the road was too close. So I rolled them up my legs as far as they would go and waded out into the water. When it reached my waist I dove and swam underwater for a dozen strokes, keeping my eyes open and trying to see what the bottom was like. There was a fair current, and it surprised me, for I hadn't thought to find it so close to shore. But when I came up and shook the water from my eyes I saw that my first strong strokes had sent me well out toward the middle of the river. And right then, while I was treading water until I could clear my eyes, my legs jerked up like steel wires, with cramps, and I went under. I was scared, but I used my arms quick and hard and broke water again. As soon as I felt air on my face I yelled, and for an instant I saw the river and the willow trees and the bank very clearly, except that everything seemed turned around. I heard the sharp, excited barking of a dog somewhere behind me. Then the river grabbed me again and I went haywire, and began yelling into water. I was crazy with terror, but I remember thinking, foolishly, that now I would never get the money Hartung owed me. The water and the air were fighting in my lungs and I felt like a big bubble that was about to burst. Suddenly I felt myself grabbed around the neck and there was air on my face again; and in that instant something crashed against my chin. There were a great many lights that glowed for a moment and went out. And I went out with them. All this was probably a matter of seconds, but it seemed a very long time.

Afterward I was sitting propped against a tree with the bright, slanting sun in my eyes. I felt weak and groggy and my jaw throbbed with a dull pain. I squinted against the light and saw, on a level with mine, the soft, worried eyes of a blue-ticked English setter; and I thought: *That must be the dog I heard barking.* Then a man's voice, warm and friendly, with a faint blur of accent, said: "You think you'll live, eh?"

I looked up and saw a man of fifty or so, tall and well-fleshed, his body bare above his water-soaked trousers. He had a round skull covered with grey hair cut in a bristly pompadour, a heavy mustache, and a little grey goatee strung with bright beads of water.

Before I could speak, I turned my head and, leaning on my hands, gave back to the riverbank a lot of Chariton water.

"I guess we feel better now, eh?" he said amiably.

I agreed and sat back against the tree, feeling my throbbing jaw.

"I am sorry about that," he said, "but I had to do it."

"That's all right," I said, trying to smile.

Standing up, rather shakily, against the tree, I tried to thank him.

"I've never had my life saved before," I said, "and I don't know just what to say. But I certainly didn't want to lose it, and I would have, all right, if it hadn't been for you."

I held out my hand to him, and he took it, silently. I suppose he felt as embarrassed as I did.

I was beginning to shiver a little and he noticed it. "Here, here," he said. "This will never do. You must get some clothes on."

I looked around and saw my shirt, a blue spot on the willows twenty feet away, and moved toward it. He detained me, smiling.

"We will let Elsa wait on us," he said.

He pointed to the willows where my shirt was hanging.

"Fetch!" he said.

The setter was off like a streak and came back holding her head high, my shirt just trailing the ground. He took it from her and brushed it off and handed it to me.

"It is not very good for clothes to have Elsa bring them," he said apologetically. "But it gives her such pleasure."

She went back and brought my shoes, one at a time. Then he pointed up the bank at a coat and shirt and shoes, scattered at intervals where he must have flung them, running to the river to pull me out. While I was putting on my shirt she brought back his things, one by one, handling her forefeet delicately, so as not to tread on them.

"Does she hunt as well as that for you?" I asked.

He stopped tying his tie and said simply: "She is the greatest dog in the world." And the way he said it made me feel I should have known better than to have asked such a question. We finished dressing,

POLICE
DEDINI

and started up the bank. I was wobbly and he took my arm. There was a muddy Ford parked at the side of the road with the engine running and one door standing open; I saw the two long, smooth streaks in the dirt where he had skidded as he had jammed on the brakes.

"By the way," I said, "my name's Quinn. John Quinn."

"And I am Doctor Kiedrowski," he said. "Doctor Paul Kiedrowski." And he made a little bow. "And now we will put you in the front seat and Elsa in the back, and we will go to my house and have a little drink while we dry our pants by the stove."

I hated to accept anything more from him and told him so; that I could just cut across the fields to Hartung's and my dungarees would be dry by the time I got there. But he wouldn't hear of it.

"I'm the doctor," he grinned, "and I prescribe applejack. You'll get no applejack at Max Hartung's, I can tell you. Max raises fine apples, the best around here, but he doesn't know what an apple is for." Taking me by the elbow he pushed me into the front seat.

I wasn't at all unwilling, and didn't even try to stop him when he took a horse blanket from the back of the car and wrapped it around my legs. The setter scrambled into the back seat and for a second I felt her cold, friendly nose against my neck.

"It has a history, that blanket," the Doctor said as he slid into the seat beside me. "Once Elsa had puppies on it, in the woodshed, and once a woman had a baby on it, in a cow barn."

We rattled along at a good clip, the little car seeming to be all over the road at once. The bitch stood with her forepaws on the door and her clean head stuck out into the wind.

"How did that happen, about the baby?" I asked, trying to keep my teeth from chattering.

"She slipped and fell, with two milk pails," he said, "and there wasn't time to get her to the house."

He missed a culvert on a turn by a scant two feet, and I held my breath, but he kept on talking.

"It was in the wintertime, and very cold, and my hands were stiff. I had to warm them on a cow's udder before I could work. And then I had to work by lantern light. What do you think of that?"

"That sounds like real doctoring," I said. He looked pleased.

"You can't do fancy obstetrics in a barn. It was just hard work."

He turned into a narrow road commanded by a big white house with a mansard roof. He stopped the car under a big tree at the side of the house and we walked up the graveled path in the failing light, the prancing setter a lighter blur ahead of us.

We went down a long hallway and into a warm, bright kitchen. There was a big oil lamp with a white china shade on the table, and a calendar clock on a shelf over the sink showed a quarter to seven o'clock. It was hard to believe that only an hour and a quarter had passed since I had been with Hartung in the orchard. The doctor looked around the kitchen and his face fell like a child's. There was a milk pail, almost full, on the table and when he saw it he grinned.

"Ah," he said. "One milk pail. That means she is filling the other one. Now," he took me by the arm, "for our dry trousers."

"Look, I'll be all right," I said. "I'll just stand here by the stove and they'll be dry in a jiffy."

"No, sir," he said. "You come with me."

He steered me into a room that gave off the kitchen and lit a lamp. There was a big double bed and a dresser, and a chair by the little table that the lamp was on, and a smell of matting. I hadn't smelled matting for years, and it took me back, the way smells will. I saw my room at home, in Pennsylvania, with the yellow matting on the floor, and heard my mother's voice saying, as she turned out the light: "Good night, John. Sleep tight."

I took off my wet dungarees and put on the trousers the doctor had taken from a closet. They were worn corduroy, at least two sizes too large around my waist, but the length was all right. He showed me where the bathroom was, a little room off the bedroom, and when I came out into the kitchen he had our trousers drying on a chair by the stove and two stiff drinks of applejack waiting for us on the table.

"Stop or I'll yodel!"

It was good applejack, so aromatic that you could smell ripe apples in the room. The doctor was buttoning the coat of a stiff, Sunday-looking blue serge suit, and he held out a glass to me.

"Your health!" he said, and feeling self-conscious as I had when we had shaken hands by the river, I clinked his glass with mine. As I drank, I felt the slow, pleasant fire go all the way down to my toes.

"This is worth almost drowning for," I said.

He held his glass proudly up to the light.

"This is the finest applejack in Iowa," he said. "Hellfire, it's the finest in the country. I made it out of Max Hartung's apples. It's now six years in the barrel."

At that moment the kitchen door opened and I lost track of everything except the woman who stood there in the doorway with a milk pail in her hand. I have thought since that the excitement at the river and then the liquor might have made me feel as I did when I saw her, but I know that isn't so. I'd have felt that way whenever or wherever I had seen her. I just stood there with the glass in my hand and looked. A voice inside of me said, clear as a bell: "There she is." I felt happy, and very alive and a little frightened, and my whole life seemed to arrange itself into a path that had led to this room.

She must have been about my age, thirty-two or -three, nearly as tall as I, with hair very black and skin very white. Her eyes were big and deep, dark blue, with shadows around them. She was wearing a man's overcoat, too big for her, and under it a checked dress—gingham, I suppose. I knew she was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen in my life. But the funny thing was that there was no real surprise. It seemed as though I had always known her.

All this lasted a second, perhaps two. It was the way it had been when I was drowning, and a second seemed a long time. As the doctor's booming voice brought me to earth, I looked away from her into the lamplight, like a blinded moth.

"Ah, here she is," he was saying. "Just in time to have a drink with us, and for us to drink her health."

I had forgotten I still had my glass in my hand until he reached over and rang his glass against mine. I downed my drink at one gulp, without looking at her, and it might have been so much water, for all I tasted it. He smacked his lips.

"Eileen," he said, "this is Mr. Quinn, who went swimming with me in the Chariton this afternoon, and we got our clothes wet. I've brought him home for a drink, and maybe he will stay for supper." He turned to me. "Mr. Quinn, I am very proud to say that this is Mrs. Kiedrowski."

He took the milk pail from her and kissed her on the cheek. Somehow hearing him say that she was his wife, and seeing him kiss her, seemed crazy and wrong. She smiled at me and I heard her say, in a voice I was sure that I had been hearing all my life: "Good evening, Mr. Quinn."

And I heard myself saying: "How do you do, Mrs. Kiedrowski."

The doctor moved between us putting the pail of milk away and I thought: *I better get out of here quick, right away, before he finds out the way I feel about his wife.* I saw her look at the trousers drying by the stove and I said:

"Your husband said we went swimming in the Chariton, Mrs. Kiedrowski, but that isn't quite so. I was in swimming and got cramps and he came along and saved my life."

She had been standing with her back to me, washing her hands at the sink, but now she turned around.

"I'm awfully glad," she said.

I took a deep breath and looked straight into her eyes. I said: "You can imagine how I feel." I was beginning to feel the applejack, like a sunlight in my head, in back of my eyes.

The doctor cleared his throat in an embarrassed way and came over and put his hand on my shoulder.

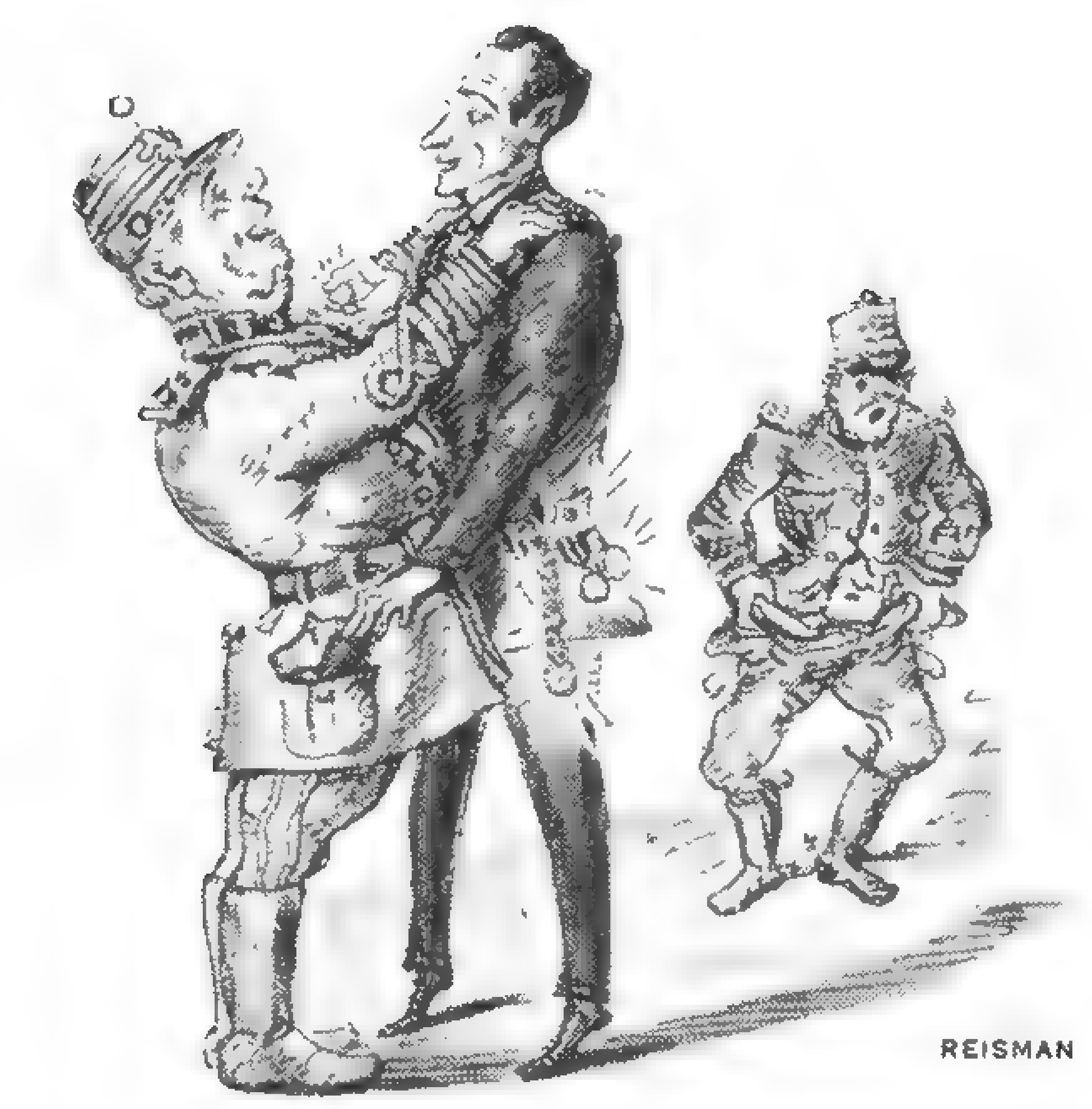
"Now, now," he said. "You're not going to make a hero out of me. I told you it was nothing, what I did. Anybody could have done it."

He poured three drinks from the little jug *(Continued on page 180)*

Anything would be easier to believe about Borra than the simple truth

Silhouette of a Displaced Personality

by ARNOLD GINGRICH



There has been a persistently increasing crime wave in Vienna for some time, so it was not surprising to the heads of the American CID—the Army's Criminal Investigation Division—when one day, a matter of a few months back, they were called together to consult a perplexed Austrian official on ways and means to combat the unprecedented thievery. The suave and courtly young Austrian, who was introduced to the CID men as the official responsible for crime control, may have appeared to some of them, in his trim elegance, as a type who might be better cast as Chief of Protocol or even, say, Commissioner in Charge of Viennese Waltzing. In contrast to the burly and hard-boiled CID leaders with whom he was surrounded, he looked more suited to replace, at the drop of a lace handkerchief, the better half of practically any of the better ballroom dance teams. However, he held their attention from the moment the interview started. He flattered the Americans a bit at first, naturally as any official of an occupied country can always be expected to do, telling them that of course his police were nowhere nearly as competent to deal with the criminals as the CID men would be. "For instance"—he pulled a watch from his pocket—"one of my policemen might be standing right beside the man who stole this watch—I mean at the very moment of his stealing it—and never notice a thing." All the Americans looked a bit smug at that point, although some looked slightly incredulous. "But worse than that," he went on, "he might have his own pocket picked at the same time, and never even notice that!" This was too much, and the Americans now grinned frank disbelief. Thereupon the speaker handed the watch to the CID man standing on his left and, drawing a wallet from his own pocket, handed it to the CID man on his right. They both looked so foolish as they recognized their own property, lifted during this discourse on their superiority to the Austrian policemen, that their chief couldn't help laughing. "Oh, I wouldn't laugh," gently reproved the Austrian, turning to their amused chief, "there are some things in this situation that you yourself couldn't control, for instance—uh, pardon me, your—ah—your cravat," and he pointed significantly at his own necktie. The startled CID chief, no longer laughing, discovered that his tie was gone from around his neck. That was a coincidence rendered somewhat less coincidental by the fact that at the very moment of his being introduced all around, the purported Austrian police official had managed, without attracting either the chief's attention or that of any of his men, to remove the former's tie and slide it unseen into his own pocket. Subsequently he had held their attention so closely with his talk about watches and wallets that nobody had looked at the chief to notice his missing tie until the moment chosen to point it out. The resultant uproar around American Army circles in Vienna was merely stupendous, of course. Legend has not yet settled the question, long hotly debated, of whether it was General Mark Clark himself, then about to retire from Vienna, or his deputy, Brigadier General Ralph Tate, who arranged this stooging of the CID's hotshots. A third version credits the baiting of that particular trap to neither of the brass hats in question, but to an engaging young extrovert named Bill Hutton, in the British Army's Vienna Public Relations Office, who had arranged similar scenes for the embarrassment of various British big shots. However that may be, it was all strictly old stuff to the supposed Austrian police official who wasn't of course, a police official at all, nor for that matter even an Austrian, but a twenty-six-year-old Yugoslav, extraordinarily endowed as a professional pickpocket, known in Vienna as Borra because his real name, Borislav Milojkavich, is too hard for even the Viennese to remember.

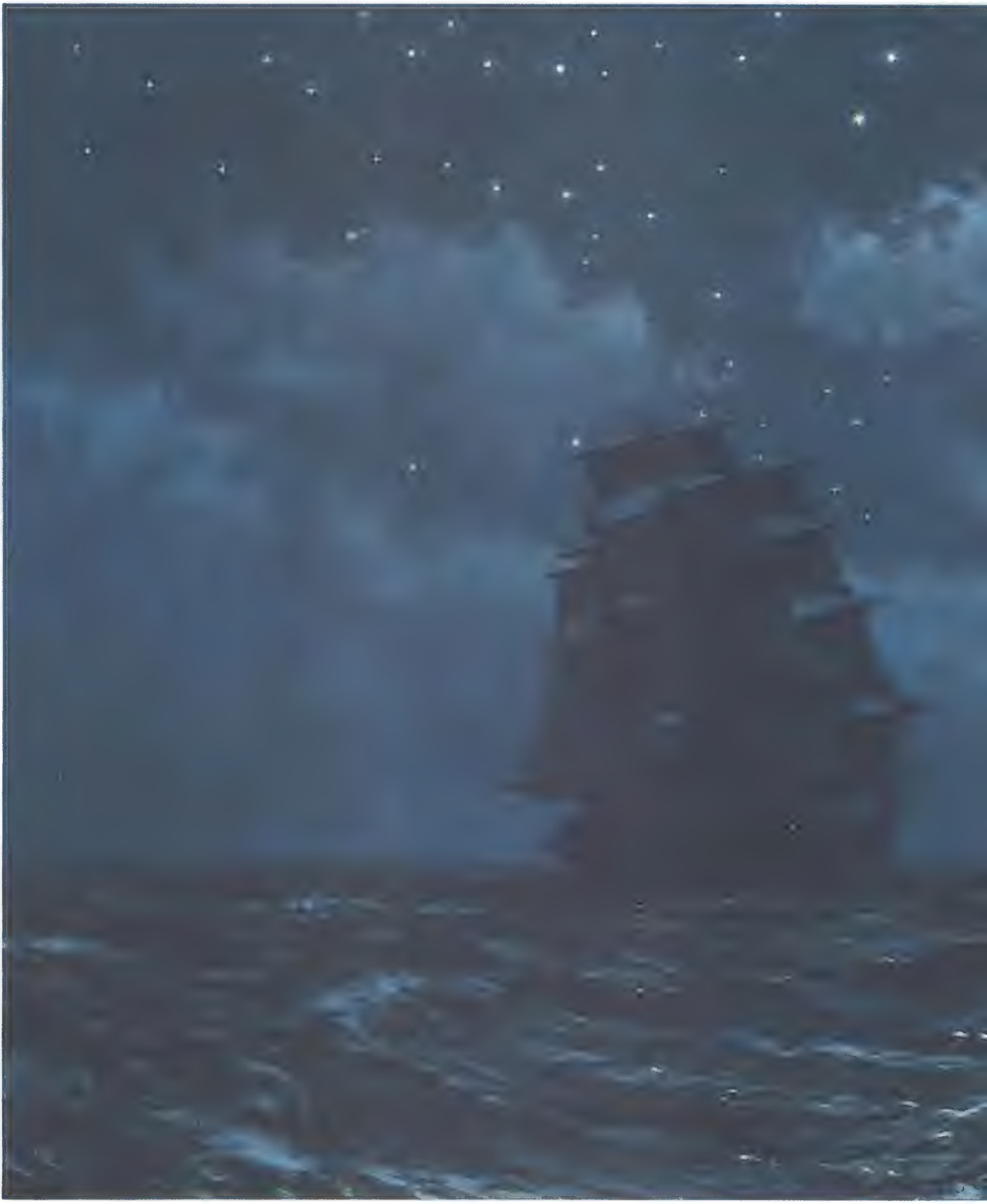
Borra had been picking pockets, removing watches, ties, and even belts and suspenders, from police chiefs, detective-bureau heads, and other presumably aware personages for years. He had in fact done the very same trick back in his native Yugoslavia before the war when the international conference of crime experts in Sarajevo in 1938 was enlivened by an explanation from the chairman on how hard it is to control pickpockets—a speech that was illustrated, not to say dramatized, by Borra's returning to the assembled police chiefs, severally and individually, the watches, wallets and other possessions he had lifted off every last one of them as they convened for the conference. One of the wariest of these gumshoe operators, either tipped off beforehand about Borra's intention to rob every visiting policeman or, if not, then just naturally suspicious of his fellow thief-catchers, had come prepared, having left behind his wallet, watch and every "liftable" possession. So, off *him* Borra took six coat buttons, three down the front and three off one sleeve, without being detected.

Later, in Prague, when he was first doing a nightly vaudeville turn to capitalize his peculiar talent, policemen were his favorite customers, too, as he worked the streets each day industriously striving to assure an increased attendance at his theatre each night. His method was to swipe the watches off as many of the citizenry as he could connect with in a day's conscientious endeavor, replacing each watch with a printed card to advise each victim, the next time he wanted to know what time it was, that Borra had taken his watch and that he could get it back that evening by claiming it on the stage during Borra's performance.

For a few weeks after his debut among the CID men Borra was kept busy swiping virtually everything but the pants off all the Allied High Brass around Vienna. On one momentous occasion he took the watches from the American, British, and French High Commissioners for Austria, and calmly "discovered" them in the pocket of the Soviet High Commissioner. Everybody laughed—the Soviet Element loudest of all. The big brass among the Americans and the British soon fell all over each other vying for Borra's services to enliven their dinner parties. There is even a persistent bit of apocrypha to the effect that one colonel's lady made a hen-party of afternoon bridge at her villa particularly memorable by getting Borra to call, a little too early, as the escort come to pick up one of her guests, and had him kibitz at one table where the play was not yet ended. At that table sat a lady against whom the hostess had a long-standing grudge. When she stood up, at the end of the rubber, her pants fell to the floor. Borra himself (*Continued on page 161*)

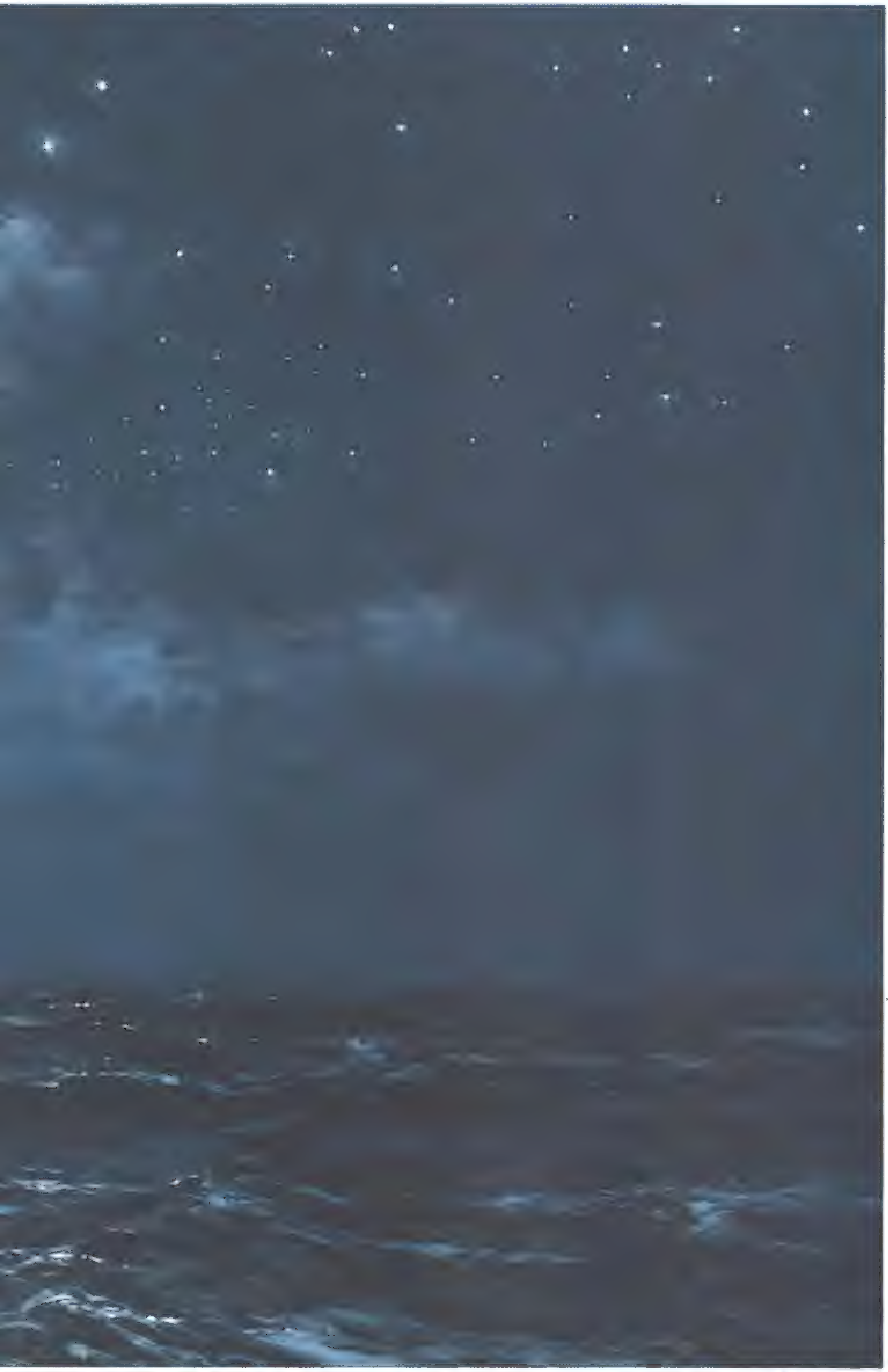
HAPPY NEW YEAR

"That's just the trouble—I've behaved myself for 65 years!"



The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out. At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea, off shot the specter-bark.
—SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

SEASCAPE *by Mon*



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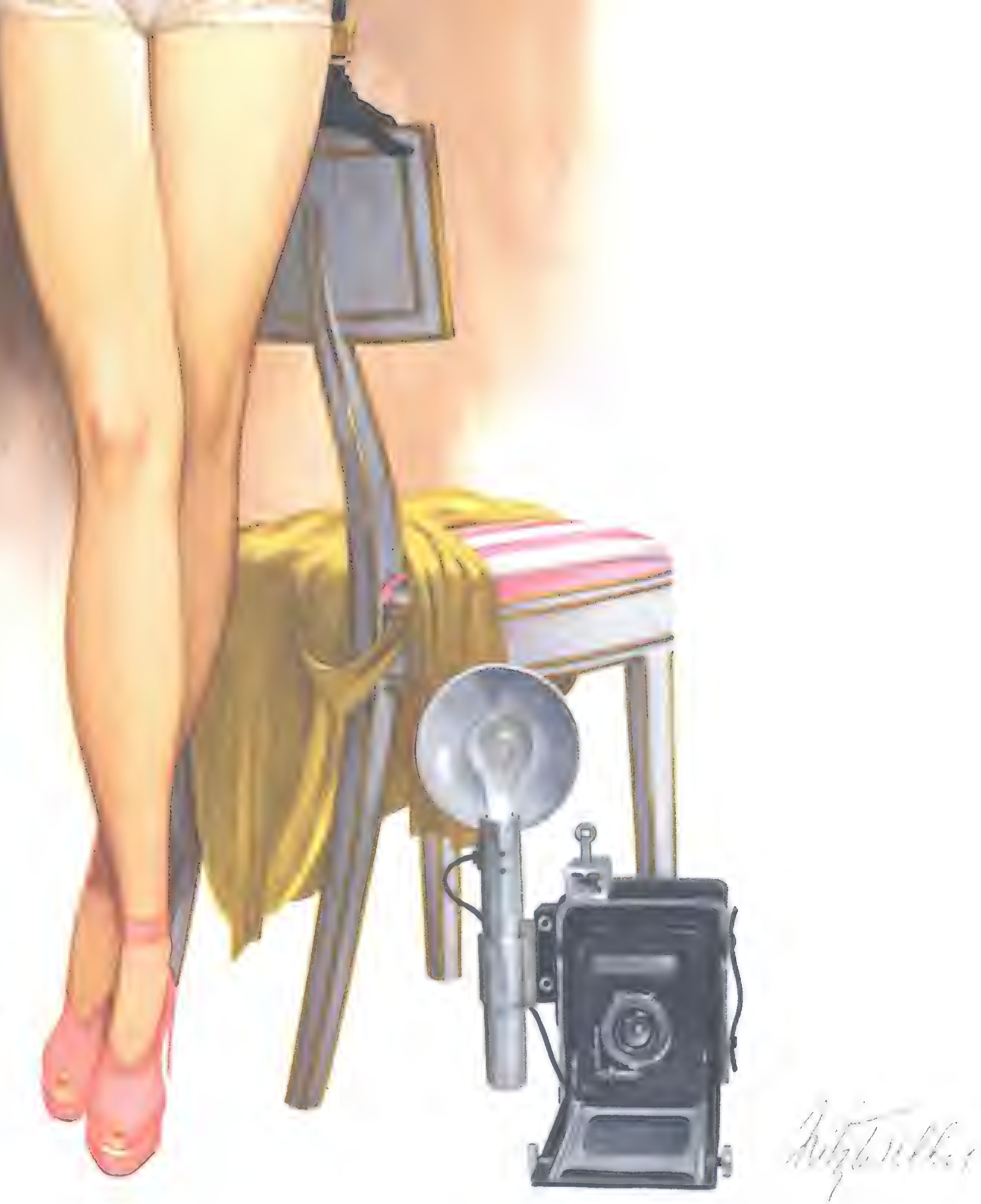
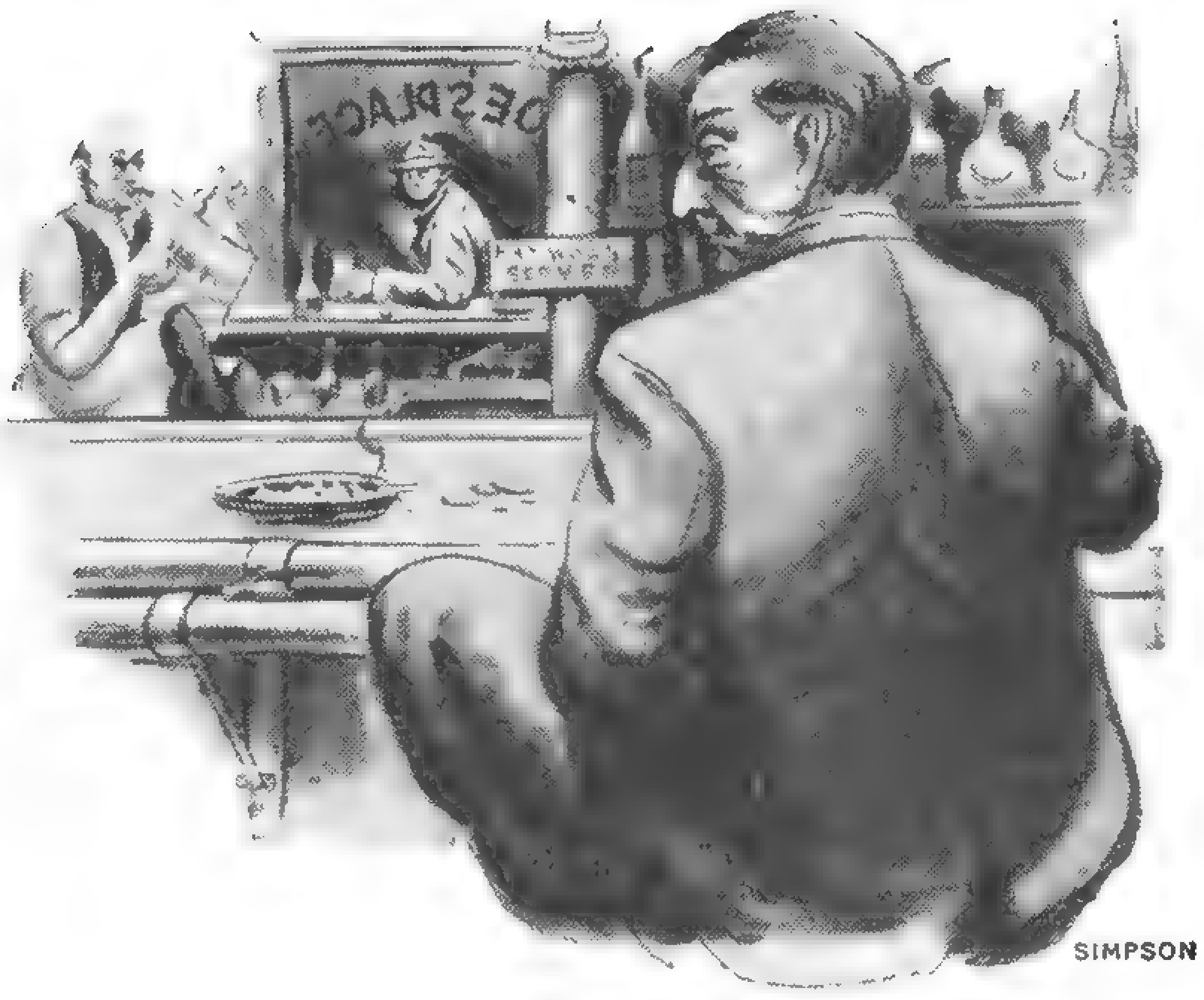


Candidly Yours

PAINTED ESPECIALLY FOR ESQUIRE BY FRITZ WILLIS



He was a cunning little guy, quick as a rat; he always worked alone and could hit a man with a knife from twenty feet

The Envelope

by PAUL C. FIELDING

I LOOKED again at the little man sitting across the bar. From the casual way he'd been eying me, I guessed he was the guy MacHugh had described. If I could look under his hat I'd be damn sure. Except for this fellow, the bartender, and me, the place was empty.

I glanced at my watch. The bar would close in twenty minutes. That meant that MacHugh wouldn't show up; he had said not to wait for him after 3:40 a.m., but to bring the envelope to him in New Jersey. I'd give MacHugh another five minutes; then, if he didn't show up, I'd go to New Jersey. Unless the little man tried to stop me. I slipped my left hand down to feel the envelope's weight. As I moved my arm, his eyes jumped. But he hadn't looked at me.

I studied his face again for the tenth time. Broad forehead, long nose, wide tight-lipped mouth, nervous Adam's apple. He looked like the picture all right. But I had to be sure.

The bartender glanced over his shoulder at the clock on the wall.

"Last call," he said, without looking at either of us.

I moved over to the little man. "Have a drink?" I said. He shook his head, without answering.

I put my left hand into my pocket and stood up. The last time he had followed me into the men's room; I wanted to see if he'd do it again. I took a step toward the door, and he was beside me.

"Go ahead," I said, pleasantly. He opened the door.

"After you," he said and his eyes flickered.

Old MacHugh had told me he always worked alone, a cunning little guy, quick as a rat. I didn't think he had a gun, the tight coat over his narrow frame would have showed an outline. They said he could throw a knife from twenty feet away and split a button or a man's guts. When I turned, he had both hands in his overcoat pockets.

I stepped back to take a paper towel, ignoring him while he stayed beside the basin, between me and the door. He dipped his hands under the tap. Then I turned and smiled at him.

"Hell of a night out," I said, casually.

"Yeah," he said. "It's a blizzard."

I took my time, using several paper towels. When he took off his hat, I saw the scar. The thought of that twenty-foot flash of steel made my heart thump a little bit harder. He could be a killer.

I'd have to work fast. It was dark outside, and if I had to run for it the hobnails in my boots would hold in the snow. He followed me out of the men's room.

The bartender was putting the liquor away in a cupboard.

"Anybody come in while I was in there?" I asked.

The bartender turned, shook his head. "Nope," he said.

I walked up the stairs, out into the street, keeping my left hand in my pocket. The little man was right behind me.

Through the blinding snow, two dim headlights came slowly toward us. I held my head down and sidewise against the blizzard. There was a small lighted coffee shop on the corner, a hundred yards to the left. The darkest corner was twenty feet to the right.

"Jeez, it's cold!" I said. "How about a cup of coffee?" The little man's right hand was tucked up into the coat sleeve.

"Aren't you waiting for somebody?" he said.

"Yeah," I said. "But he'll know where to find me. Let's go."

I started toward the darkest corner, away from the coffee shop, as though I had a place in mind. The thumping in my heart rose to my throat, suffocating me. The little man walked slightly behind me.

"Sure your friend will show up?" he asked. So that was his object in waiting. He also wanted to get MacHugh.

"Sure," I answered. His right hand was still tucked up into his sleeve; he probably already had the knife out of its sheath.

We got to the corner. He stopped the same instant I did. Except for the headlights about fifty yards away, there were no lights anywhere. I could hear the sound of a truck motor, but I couldn't see it.

"We've come the wrong way," he said, drily, and I saw him slip a small, flat automatic out of his left pocket.

"Yeah, damn it!" I said, my heart in my mouth. I twisted my body a little down and sidewise. "It's back there," I said. My knees and armpits felt sticky. "Cigarette?"

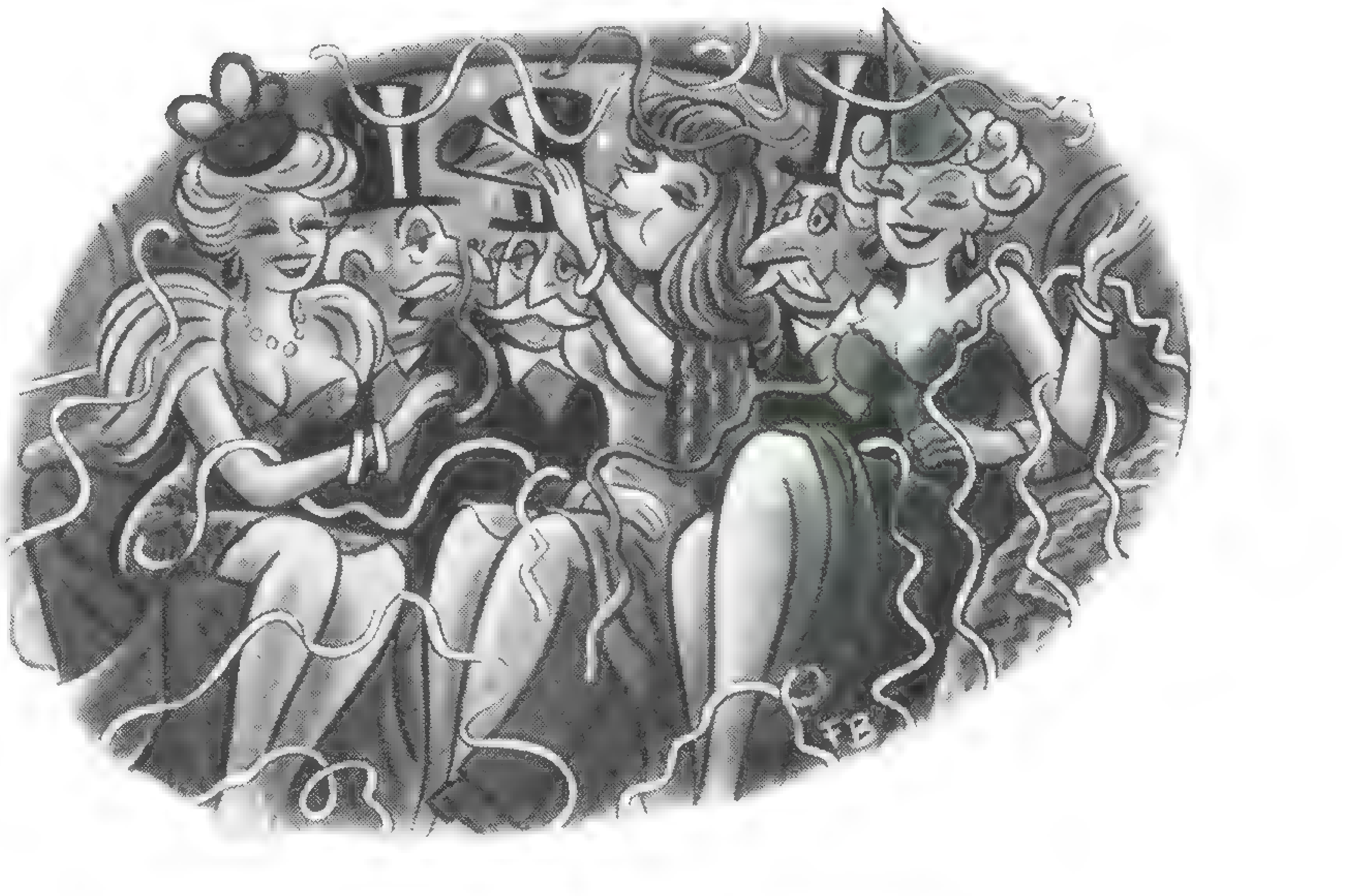
I had a package of cigarettes in my hand as I swung round and let him have my elbow hard on the Adam's apple. I grabbed his wrists as they came up, my lifted knee catching him in the groin. He doubled up, choking; the gun dropped from his hand. There was no knife. I spun his puny body so that he fell on his back, his arms pinned under him. I lifted my foot and smashed the heavy hobnailed boot down on his throat, grinding him into the gutter. He didn't have a chance. In a few seconds he lay still.

The truck was near now. But, because of the snow and his dim headlights, I was sure the driver hadn't seen us. Quickly I kicked the gun into the sewer grating under the little man's shoulder. Then I crouched in the gutter, the thin body in my arms.

I let the truck and the front wheels of the huge trailer pass me; then moving quickly I pushed the body forward. A second later, I watched the heavy double rear wheels spread the head into a dark mass. It would look like an accident.

I looked up and down the street. The taillight of the truck showed faintly halfway down the block. That was all. I stood up and shook the snow from my clothes. Then I put my hands in my pockets and walked back in the shadow of the wall toward the lighted window of the coffee shop.

Old MacHugh would be generous. I wondered how big a cut he would give me this time. I smiled, feeling the edges of the four big diamonds in the envelope. Hell, it might have been me lying there dead in the street, instead of the skinny little cop with the scar. #



"Let's not go to a crowded night club"

Peabody Potter was a lawyer whose name in Hollywood meant trouble or triumph, just depending on which side he fought

Right to Privacy

by **RIAN JAMES**

FAULKNER

Mr. Potter was at peace with the world. Clad in a voluminous red-and-white striped robe, and tingling pleasantly from a full half-hour under the needle shower, he ate a tremendous breakfast, laced it with six cups of steaming coffee, topped it off with half a jar of marmalade adroitly smuggled to the table under the very nose of Ella, his housekeeper, and sighed contentedly.

It was Saturday: a warm, sunny Saturday, and Saturday was his day away from the office, and that was pleasant to contemplate.

The bright, early-morning sun beamed over the ridge of the *papier-mâché* mountains across the canyon, and Mr. Potter folded his hands across his middle and beamed right back at it.

Ella, shuffling out from the kitchen to clear the breakfast table, looked at him and frowned.

"You ailin'?" she asked.

"Suffering," Mr. Potter mumbled. "Acute attack of lethargy!"

Ella was large, loose-jointed and amiable, and after some eleven years in Mr. Potter's employ quite ready for anything. She snorted. "You sufferin' fum a cute attack of hot cakes, pork sausages, an' too much toas'," she snapped, "plus which ah knows all about de marmalade, so's you might jes' as well un-hide de jar!"

"Marmalade?" Mr. Potter asked innocently.

"It's *your* figger," she said, resignedly.

"What's the matter with my figure?" he demanded.

"Ah don't rightly know," she said, " 'cause dey ain't nothin' left of it, but de place where it wuz!"

Mr. Potter sighed. He was a massive man; short, broad and barrel-chested, with a moon-round, puckish face and large, owlish eyes. He had a mass of unruly black hair, shot with grey, veriest suggestion of a neck—and hands like hams! He was an easygoing, uninhibited man; lumbering, slow-gaited and calm. Despite his apparent lethargy, he was one of the shrewdest, most successful lawyers in the State of California.

"No argument," he said.

Ella started back to the kitchen, stopped, and frowned.

"Whut dis lethigy stuff you say you ailin' wif?" she asked.

Mr. Potter cleared his throat and assumed his courtroom manner.

"Lethargy," he said, "is what causes you to make only six cups of coffee in a pot that was built to handle eight!"

The telephone rang before she could think of a proper retort, and she hurried inside. Mr. Potter rose and waddled into his study. He returned to the porch carrying an armload of guns and a small black bag that contained an imposing assortment of gun oils, greases, rags, and cleaning paraphernalia. He was stripping the felt cover from a gleaming Mannlicher when Ella reappeared.

"You ain't fixin' to clean dem guns *again*?" she asked, shaking her head. "Dey goin' to wear plumb out fum too much cleanin'—an' no usin'!"

"Might mind your own business," Mr. Potter said.

Ella took no offense. "Honey," she told him with a sigh, "you *is* mah business!"

Mr. Potter grinned and changed the subject. "Who phoned?"

"Mista Green, de real-estate feller fum down de road. Said he wuz fixin' t' drap by."

"You didn't tell him I was home?" he asked in alarm.

"Ah didn't hardly have to. You sittin' right out heah on de porch—big as a b'loon. He jes' have to look."

Mr. Potter was squinting through the gleaming barrel of a silver-mounted 30/06 when Milton Green trudged up the driveway. He was a tall man, with sharp, nervous eyes, a slit of a mouth, and a cynical one-jump-ahead-of-you smile. As chief sales agent for Mission Canyon Property, he affected Western clothes, and as he approached Mr. Potter he removed his broad-brimmed felt with a flourish.

"Morning, Counselor," he beamed. "Going hunting?"

Mr. Potter shook his head. "Nope."

"They tell me the deer are thick as flies up north," Green said.

"Never hunted in my life."

Green looked askance at the assortment of guns.

"Then what's the idea?" he asked.

"Don't like hunting; I like guns," Mr. Potter replied simply.

Green throttled a laugh in the making, and changed the subject. "I'd like you to do me a little favor, Peabody."

"Figured you would," Mr. Potter said. He slipped the rifle back into its case and sighed.

Green was undaunted. "Thought I could get you to write a letter for me." He smiled. "I've got a hunch that a letter from Peabody would be about twice as effective as a summons—from some other lawyer."

"Letter about what?"

Green lit a cigarette.

"It's like this," he said. "Three weeks ago I sold the Crawford place up the Canyon. I thought it was a deal. Only now, with the papers signed and the escrow ready to close, the buyer's trying to weasel out of it. I can sue him for my commission, but I thought a good stiff letter from you would bring him around without a suit!"

"Might," Mr. Potter nodded. "Who's the buyer?"

"Fellow named Turner. He's an assistant director at Metronome. He thinks just because he's in pictures . . ."

"An assistant director isn't very far—*in* pictures," Mr. Potter interrupted. "Would he be Bob Turner?"

Green nodded. "Robert Turner—that's the guy. Know him?"

"Knew his father," Mr. Potter said. "All right, I'll write the letter."

Green rose. "You tell him I expect him to go through with this deal, or I'll attach his salary every week until he's an old man with whiskers

"We're sent to bed without supper for less than that!"

down to here. You tell him that if he doesn't go through with . . ."

Mr. Potter yawned. "Why don't *you* write it?" he asked drily. "You want to threaten him—or sell him a house?"

"All right," Green laughed. "Handle it your way."

Mr. Potter waited until Green had swaggered down the driveway. Then he went to his study, telephoned young Turner and invited him to drop around to the office on Monday morning.

Mr. Potter had said ten o'clock, but the perturbed young man arrived a full half-hour earlier, and Mr. Potter was consequently taken somewhat by surprise.

The lower right-hand drawer of his desk was open, and a box of assorted chocolates, purchased in defiance of Dr. Norton's orders, was open too. Mr. Potter's pudgy forefinger was hovering uncertainly between a chocolate caramel and a marshmallow nougat, when Wendy Osborn, his secretary, knocked.

Forced to quick action, Mr. Potter plopped the nougat into his mouth, quickly buried the candy box, closed the desk drawer and called, "Come in."

Wendy Osborn was tall and slim and ash blonde—and very easy to look at—and she was smart, too.

"Mr. Turner is here," she said. "Will you see him now, or would you prefer to wait until you've finished?"

Mr. Potter looked injured, said something that sounded like "Snigrimpff," swallowed the evidence, and spluttered, "Show him in."

Bob Turner was of medium height; a rather good-looking young man, with the sort of harassed expression peculiar to an assistant director. He had brown, wavy hair, nice, honest eyes, and an occupational nervous twitch.

He said, "Good morning," in a tone he generally reserved for temperamental Hungarian directors, and eased himself down timidly on the edge of a leather armchair. Smiling disarmingly, Mr. Potter came directly to the point and when he'd finished, young Turner sighed.

"It isn't as though I didn't want to buy the place, Mr. Potter," Turner said. "It's just that—well, I was going to be married—and now I'm not—and I have no use for it. Now, I mean."

Mr. Potter lit a cigar that was half as long as his forearm, exhaled a purplish cloud and studied Turner.

"Why aren't you going to be married—now?" he said.

"It's a long story," Turner said.

"I've got a lot of time," Mr. Potter said pleasantly.

Turner inched back onto the chair.

"Well, it's just that—if I don't get married, I won't want the house—and if I *do* get married—I'll get fired—and then I can't afford the house. You see?"

"No," Mr. Potter said, with conviction. "And I have a reputation for not being particularly opaque. Who'll fire you, if you get married?"

"Mr. Bouscaren—the producer on my picture. You see, he has great plans for her."

Mr. Potter sighed. "Who's her?" he asked.

"The girl I'm not going to marry," Turner said. "Mary. Mary Foster. She's—she's sort of Mr. Bouscaren's protégée. See?"

Ordinarily, Mr. Potter was wont to hoot derisively when, in Hollywood, the term protégée was applied to any female over the age of six. However, he exercised admirable control—and merely smiled.

"It's considerably clearer," he said. "Go on."

"Mr. Bouscaren discovered her in a restaurant. She was a waitress. He must have thought she had a lot of possibilities because he put her in a picture right away. The one I'm assistant on. I—I met her on the set and I guess I stepped out of character. I mean—she's too good for me." Mr. Potter's face assumed the expression of a man badly in need of an aspirin.

"Who said she was too good for you?"

"Mr. Bouscaren," Turner said gently. "He heard Mary and I were going around together and he got real sore. He told me if I didn't stay away from Mary we'd *both* get fired—and that would be the end of her career. That's all."

"Seems almost enough," Mr. Potter said pleasantly. "Situation's reminiscent of most of Bouscaren's pictures. Lacks novelty." He frowned. "What's this—Mary think of all this?" he asked.

Turner looked shocked. "Oh—I didn't tell Mary."

"Why not?"

"Mr. Bouscaren," Turner said wearily, "said I'd better not. Or else."

Mr. Potter snorted. "You were going to be married, to a girl I presume you love, and because of Bouscaren you just up and fade out of the picture—without giving her any explanation. Is that it?"

"It wasn't because of Mr. Bouscaren; it was because of her career!"

"Bah!" Mr. Potter rose and waddled across the room.

"Young man," he boomed. "Your ethics went out with surreys and straight razors. You're a paragon of virtue in an age of dog-eat-dog! Stop being noble! Every man has a constitutional right to live his own life—or wreck it, if he wants to. But in your case a second party is involved. And you've no right to make decisions that concern her, without consulting her. Understand?"

Turner nodded slowly.

"Yes," he said timidly. "All except—do I have to buy the house?"

Mr. Potter made a face. Then, still looking wonderingly at Turner, he tried again.

"You love this—Mary?"

"Sure I love her." Turner got up.

"Then I wouldn't worry about the house," Mr. Potter said. "Chances are you *will* have to buy it. Which is only right. A deal's a deal. If more people remembered that, half the lawyers in the world would starve to death—and the other half would die of chagrin."

He walked to the door and opened it. "If I loved a girl—I'd marry her," he added. "And if I married her, we'd need a house."

He laughed pleasantly, but young Turner evidently didn't think anything was funny. He shook hands uncertainly and left, and Mr. Potter returned to his desk.

The desk was equipped with both a dictaphone and a secretary's buzzer, but Mr. Potter had little use for either. When he wanted something, he simply bellowed, and he bellowed for Wendy now. She entered, notebook in hand, a few seconds later.

"Young fellow has his problems," Mr. Potter mused. "You might call Miss Mary Foster out at Metronome. Ask her if she'll do me the courtesy to lunch with me at the studio commissary—say twelve-thirty."

Wendy nodded. "Who's she?"

"One of his problems. Protégée of Paul Bouscaren."

"Oh," said Wendy.

"Stop jumping at conclusions. In this country, we generally try 'em—before we hang 'em."

"It's a silly custom," Wendy sniffed, and flounced away.

She was back five minutes later, with the information that Miss Foster was willing, if not delighted—and apparently frightened.

"She say she was frightened?"

"No," Wendy replied. "But if she wasn't—she's the first movie actress I ever talked to who stutters!"

Wendy's diagnosis proved correct. Mary Foster was waiting in the commissary when Mr. Potter arrived—and she was frightened. Peabody Potter was a name to conjure with, in matters of law—and in the picture industry it had become a synonym for trial and trouble—or, if he was on your side, triumph! It occurred to Mary that a man like Peabody Potter didn't invite aspiring young actresses to lunch without a reason. And the thought was no sedative.

She was on her third glass of water when Mr. Potter sat down beside her. He studied her while she ordered lunch. She was pretty—small, trim and dark, with a figure that did all that might be expected of it for the pull-over and the knitted skirt she wore. Her eyes were wide and curious—and a little frightened, and she had a complexion that reminded him of strawberries à la mode!

"You under contract to Metronome?" he asked.

"No," Mary said. "I wish I were. Mr. Bous- (*Continued on page 183*)

GEORGE WOLFE

A newspaperman who was there is inclined to endorse the verdict of a new book that Eisenhower fiddled and Montgomery diddled

Two Big Ifs

by A. J. LIEBLING

FAULKNER

HARDLY has a war ended when the military men begin to argue over the way it was fought. This differs from the Monday-morning quarterbacking of college football, because each mistake in a war costs lives. It is more serious to be dead than tackled on the one-yard line, and the responsible commander cannot assume the football coach's privilege and say, "Well, we won the game anyway. Who the hell cares what the score was?" A football game also differs from war in that it must consume a fixed playing time—sixty minutes—while a war may be shortened or protracted by command decisions. Every month of the last war in Europe cost billions of dollars as well as thousands of lives—I mention the considerations in the same sentence only because dollars mean so much in reconstructing the world that they have acquired a humane importance. Every month had its price also in effect on the future history of the world—if the western Allies, for example, had won a complete victory on their front and arrived in Berlin in September, 1944, while the Russians were still deep in Poland, the whole international picture today would be vastly different.

So I despise the Smirk School of book reviewing which deprecates all criticism of Allied command in the late war as ill-mannered, not to say presumptuous, and unimportant anyway, since the war is over and the Republican Party has to find a Presidential candidate somewhere. These exponents of the Tush, Tush, or Daddy-is-always-right approach to all human problems are, as I write, already at work on Robert S. Allen, author of *Lucky Forward* (Vanguard, $5). Allen, a truculent newspaperman in civil life, was a colonel in charge of combat intelligence on Georgie Patton's staff. Lucky Forward was the code name for advanced headquarters of Georgie's Third Army.

Allen's most important thesis is that Patton was prevented from winning the war in September, 1944, while General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery fiddled and diddled a couple of weeks away, and the Germans, crowded against the ropes and helpless, hung on until their heads cleared. According to Allen, Eisenhower did the fiddling and Montgomery the diddling. We were all diddled. Anyway, Ike diverted to Monty the fuel and ammo that would have enabled Patton to roll up the left flank and encircle the rear of the disorganized German western armies. Monty, after shutting his eyes and counting to ten million by small fractions, as was his custom, wasted the stuff in an attack on the only part of the German line that was firmly established, with good morale, in the midst of a marshy area where armor could not do much. In this area the enemy had one flank on the sea and the other outside the scope of the Briton's plans. The immediate result is known in history as the Arnhem flop; the further effect was, quite possibly, seven months of unnecessary war.

The disquieting part of this story is that in the words of a song I just made up, it is not very far from right. Ex-Col. Allen naturally writes from an exclusively Third Army point of view. He doesn't care any more for Third Army than for his right arm, which he lost during the campaign. One would never gather from Allen's account that General Courtney H. Hodges' First Army (a more adult aggregation) was also in a position to end the war on the western front at that juncture if it had received the disputed supplies. But the essential point in the yarn is that the supplies went to the only spot where they couldn't possibly do any good; and that this is not just a matter of second-guessing. The point of view of Twelfth Army Group, which included both First and Third Armies, was fully presented to Supreme Headquarters (Eisenhower's) before it decided to give Monty the ball. The echoes of the wrangle filtered down to all levels of the stalled American armies while it was on; the enlisted men themselves understood what was happening when their fuel and ammunition ran out while they were rolling through a resistance no harder than process cheese. Every American officer I talked to in France that September predicted that Montgomery would squander the stuff if he got it. And he did.

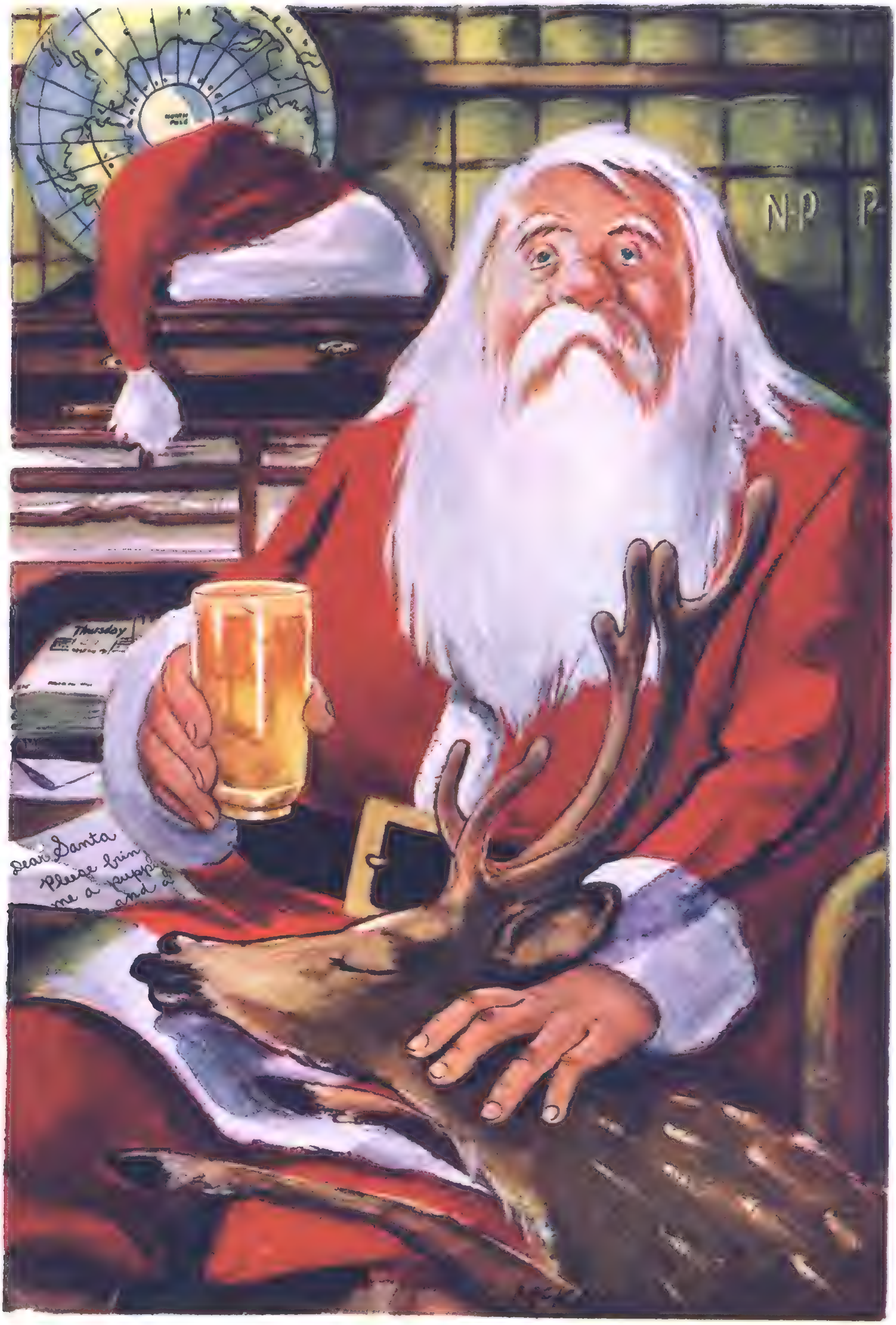
Ralph Ingersoll, who served as Lieutenant-Colonel with the staff of Twelfth Army Group, broke this story first in *Top Secret*, which he published in the Spring of 1946. Allen's book is angry and emphatic corroboration. It is natural that the attacks should be made by civilians who were wartime soldiers rather than West Pointers. The professionals, remaining in the Army, have careers to protect. But from conversations with career officers I respect, I may say that the Allen-Ingersoll thesis represents a strictly professional point of view. Ingersoll's book provoked indignant headlines in every London paper—a reaction as unreasonable as it was easy to understand. The British were the chief victims of Monty's wish to carry the ball on the touchdown play (which was in turn based on his mistaken impression that the German right flank was as demoralized as the left).

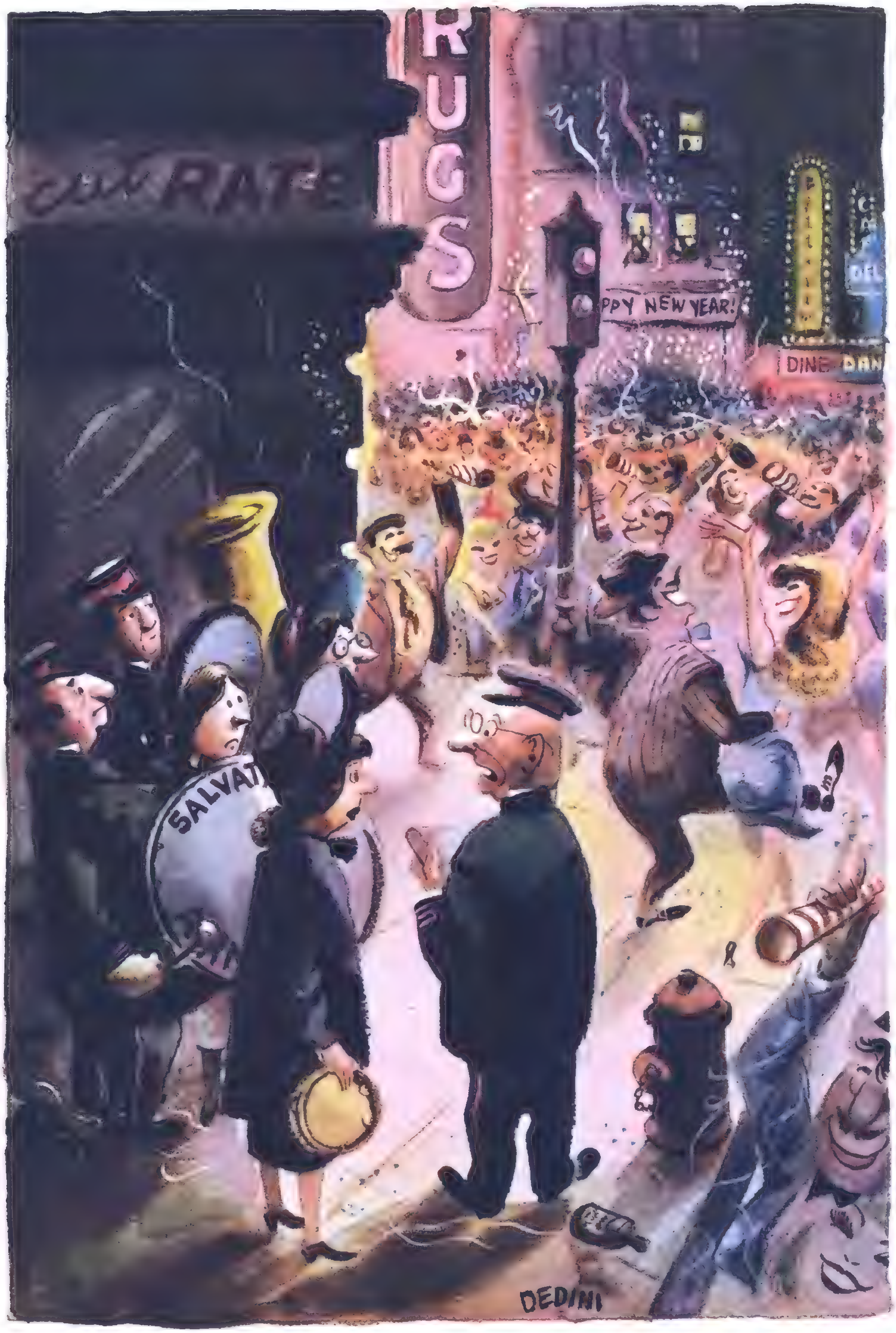
It wasn't only that British and Canadian (and New Zealand and Polish) soldiers had to slug it out for another seven months along with their American mates because of a small man's whim and the Supreme Commander's desire to propitiate the small man. The German V-2s began to arrive in London in increasing numbers late that fall—after the war might have been over, if the Oil on the End of a Feather had played the hand differently. The Oil on the End of a Feather was my pet name for SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces). It was derived from the SHAEF shoulder patch, meant to represent a sword surrounded by flames.

In the early Fall of 1944, in France, I talked to officers of the First Division whom I had known since the beginning of the North African campaign. The First was part of the First Army. They told me of having gone through the first defenses of the Siegfried line with a loss *(Continued on page 175)*

S.S. SOUTHERN
DEDINI

"Happy New Year, Jack" *"Happy New Year, Lou"*


N-P
P
Thursday
Dear Santa
Please brin
me a puppy
and a


RATE
RUGS
PPY NEW YEAR!
DINE
DAN
SALVAT
DEDINI

"Shall we go home and come back tomorrow night?"

WEBER

Mail-Order Medicine Man

African merchant sells snakeskin guards, love potions, hippo lotions or teething rings, straight from the lion's mouth

by J. A. KUGELMASS

Do you need some hippo fat to smear on your enemy's doorpost? Perhaps some lion's teeth or an elephant heart to make you brave? Or would you like to stick pins into a wax figurine and fancy it's your rival in love? Then just send off the coupon to Mr. I. Alter, whose establishment is in a good section of Johannesburg, South Africa, and who purveys by appointment to 5000 of the most exclusive witch doctors in Africa.

Hard by Johannesburg's modern shops and tall office buildings is Alter's Emporium, almost entirely mail order, which takes the thankless tasks out of the witch doctor's daily grind. Not only does Mr. Alter run a factory with more than twenty-five employees where the lion fat and sundries are rendered, but he also operates two retail shops where the jungle suburbanities can do their shopping in town.

The Sears Roebuck for the medicine men conducts itself on a sanitary basis with a staff of chemists to insure against the accidental brewing of harmful mixtures. He also has an advisory staff consisting of three seasoned witch doctors. These assistants supervise all preparations. Go-getters, with an eye to fads and fashions, they constantly recommend new formulas that will guard purchasers against evil eyes, help them to win fame, power, love and fortune, step up potency, and cure the common cold.

Alter is in constant communication with hunters and trappers who send him the vital parts of animals for processing. Out of a lion's heart, weighing about twenty ounces and costing him perhaps five dollars, thirty half-ounce bottles can be rendered, retailing to courage-deficient customers in the remotest parts of Southern Africa at about sixty cents each.

The Emporium has a catalogue written in native dialects as well as English. Hundreds of these catalogues have been sent by him to outlying trading posts and native villages and the returns might be envied by any high-powered creators of direct-mail advertising copy in the United States. "About twenty per cent," says Mr. Alter beamingly.

Snakes, especially the python, are much in demand at Alter's Emporium. The skins are sold at so much a yard, the price increasing with the intricacy of the markings. Snakeskins are worn as wristlets or as slave bracelets. The wearer, it is said, will never be bitten by a snake as long as he has some section of another of the same species on his person.

Flourishing side lines with Mr. Alter are the less choice sections of the hippo, the elephant and the lion. These odd remnants are sold as cosmetics to the Basuto tribe belles who lave themselves with the stuff in the privacy of their jungle boudoirs. A kind of pod is employed along with the laving, and Mr. Alter obligingly supplies that too.

The Emporium will also rush posthaste teething rings made of lion teeth ground down to size. Witch doctors recommend this very highly, and youngsters who use the ring are assured of teeth like a lion, of course. Porcupine quills are quite a headliner, too. They're dipped into berry juice and used for tattooing, a requisite for the tribal social life.

The mail-order house is a boon to more than 350,000 natives who are recruited to work in the gold mines and far from the sources of their medicinal and magical supplies. At times whole tribes come to work the mines, and of course the witch doctors come along and do the shopping for ailing or ambitious miners at Mr. Alter's. Orders left, special orders for some tribal function or personal client, are promptly filled. Mr. Alter leaves no stone unturned to fulfill any reasonable order such as a hyena's ear or an elephant's tail.

Interestingly enough, since the Emporium was established in one of the better sections of the city, many Europeans drop by for Saturday's browsing through the merchandise.

Often lady shoppers will shamefacedly ask for love potions and giggle a bit too nervously. Others claim to find a real remedy in some of the witch-doctor formulas for colds, fevers, toothache and rheumatism. An analysis of many of the roots and distilled fats show that they contain, amazingly enough, many of the basics which are used in formulating standard drugstore prescriptions in more traveled parts of the world.

How Mr. Alter got into the business is obvious, he says. "Here are hundreds of thousands of pathetic natives with no place to shop; with no confidence in white man's medicine. My mail-order business is a boon to them."

So if you go to Africa and hear the dull, incessant beating of the tom-toms, don't worry about the sharp spears, the kerries or the assegai . . . it may be only a mail-order message to Mr. Alter being sped special delivery to ask him to get the skin off the belly of a crocodile to offset unrequited love or a severe itch. ⧻

BERNARD

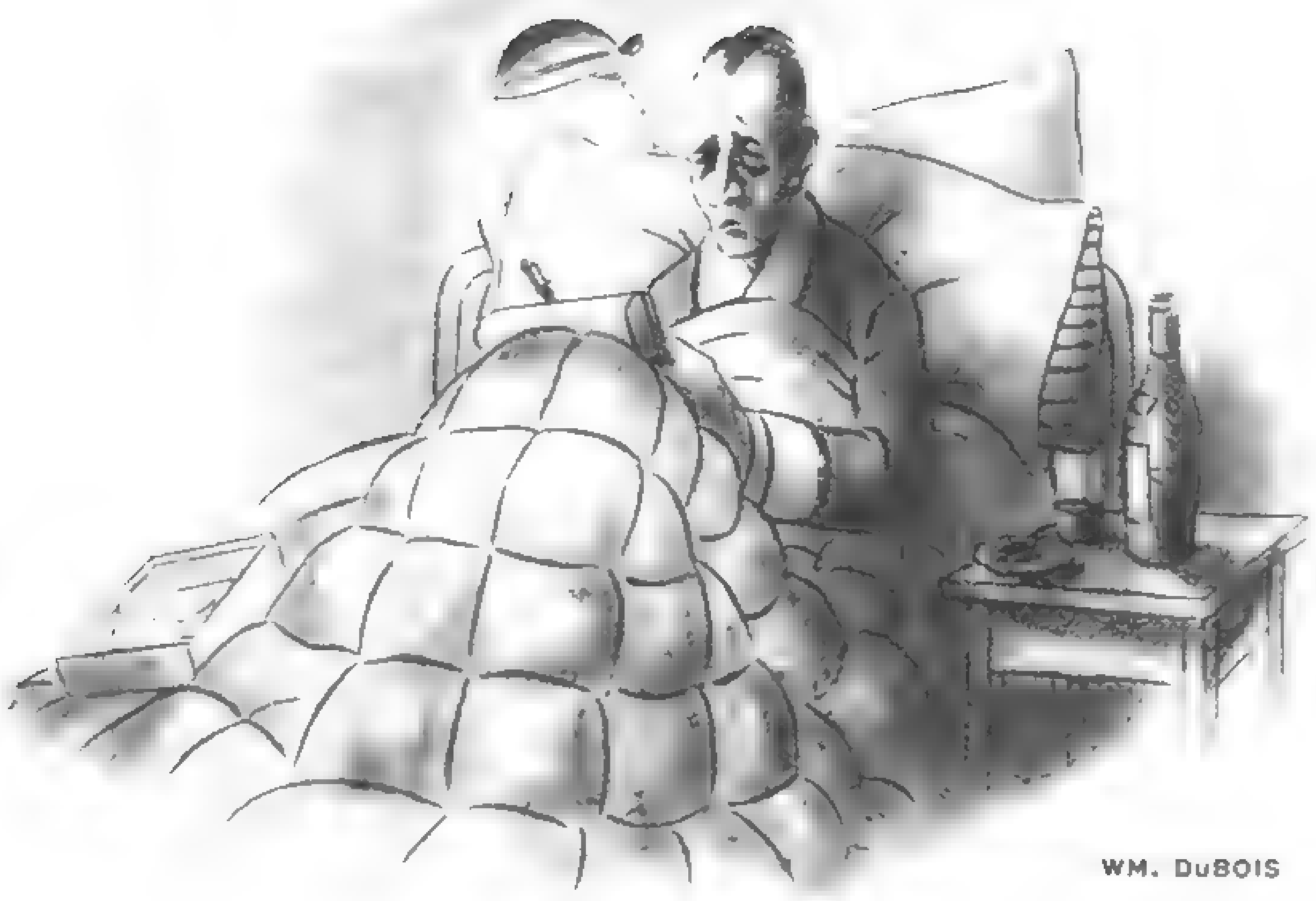
Movies: Cheesecake Queen

Some girls sing and some girls dance and some girls just have their pictures taken. That Ramsey Ames is eminently photogenic from head to toe it is hardly necessary to point out, and there is probably no one in all the celluloid city who knows whether she can sing or dance or even act. In Hollywood there are girls who are movie stars and there are girls who are not and there are girls who are in the middle—in the movies but never seen on a screen—and the current queen of these is Miss Ames. Hedda Hopper reports her at Mocambo and Ciro's with the tinsel town's eligible swain, and newspaper readers gaze at her face and figure two dozen times a year, clad in bathing suit, a bunch of grapes or a new plastic. But no one has seen a foot of film containing Miss Ames, and maybe no one ever will.

His associates would scarcely have imagined the scholarly Economics professor capable of the melodrama his night thoughts revealed

Design in Confetti

by SAMSON RAPHAELSON



WM. DuBOIS

It was well after midnight, and Professor Henry Gurn, lying sleepless in his bed, watched the snow weave past his window and heard the storm rise on the distant campus. It came racing from the open fields behind the University, across the stadium, tackled the elms headlong, and narrowed its channels into the streets, finally shuddering past the apartment house where he lived. He turned on the bedside lamp, got up and started getting dressed.

He was in his overcoat, had his hat on and was about to wind the wool muffler around his neck when he stopped, looked at himself in the mirror, laughed wryly, and sat down on the bed.

He could see himself, a Viking tragically complaining against the gods in the maelstrom, bent and harrowed in the dark white ferocity, until finally at dawn he was spent and unreleased—like hell he could. Professor Gurn was a long-faced, slim, tall, somewhat stoop-shouldered, sedentary and slightly bald thirty-seven-year-old Economics scholar. He knew that by the time he clattered down the two flights of iron stairs and across the draughty, bleakly lighted foyer there wouldn't be enough Viking left in him to wrestle his way out of the front doors.

He got up and took off muffler, overcoat and hat. He went into the living room, sat down at the desk, turned on the student lamp and stared at the pad of ruled yellow writing paper. Four hours ago he had come home in the lightly drifting snow, and until midnight had tried to say it, write it, what he felt. It had come out like a blank-verse poem, if anything. Three lines, and he had dried up.

People out of love are inferior people.
People out of love should humbly sell shirts,
  run trains, paint pictures, shovel coal
  and keep house.
But, whenever they get a chance, they should
  drop everything and get down on their
  knees to people who are in love.

A bottle of bourbon stood on the desk, half full. He drew it toward him, then pushed it away. He had drunk two-and-a-half bottles in the last five evenings and, while they helped, he had felt ghastly each morning—and tomorrow he had an eight-o'clock class, overcrowded with war veterans who saw too much. Besides, the suspense was over for him now, and when you really know the score you don't drink.

The snowstorm tried to break the window in his face. He arose, chilled, and felt the radiator; it was cold. He looked helplessly around the bachelor apartment; then got his jacket and shoes off, put on a wool robe, took the writing pad, a pen and a box of stationery and climbed into bed. He propped the pad against his knees, drew some letterheads from the box, rested them on the pad and began writing:

"Dear Norma: It is unnecessary for me to say that I never in my life behaved as I have tonight. Surely you must know this. And you must know, regardless of what I said or did, that I would never have raped you, even if you had not screamed.

"I am writing now in an effort to give you peace of mind. Not about the exhibition I made of myself and the distress I caused you. (For I'm sure I didn't actually frighten you—you're too strong and wise, and you know me too well—and it was only snowing lightly when you left the stadium locker room, so the walk to Theta house couldn't have been an ordeal.) I'm considering any strokes of conscience you may have, when you think the matter over.

"I know you'll never see me again, and there's no apology I can make—the thing is beyond apology. But I can't leave it where it was when you ran out of the dark locker room into the night.

"Norma, I can understand these stories in the newspapers every day—how a returning veteran, finding his old girl has tired of him, abducts her . . . kills her . . .

"And I'm sure it's never a great love. If the girl had married him, he wouldn't have kept love long.

"What I'm trying to say is I do not love you. I haven't even that tragic excuse for the dreadful hour I forced upon you. I'm saying this because, sitting here and trying to be honest, I can imagine you finally feeling sorry for me, even perhaps feeling an awe for a passion that could be so violent, and, having a sense of being cold and heartless and small yourself, conceiving of yourself as a woman incapable of love or anything else big and generous.

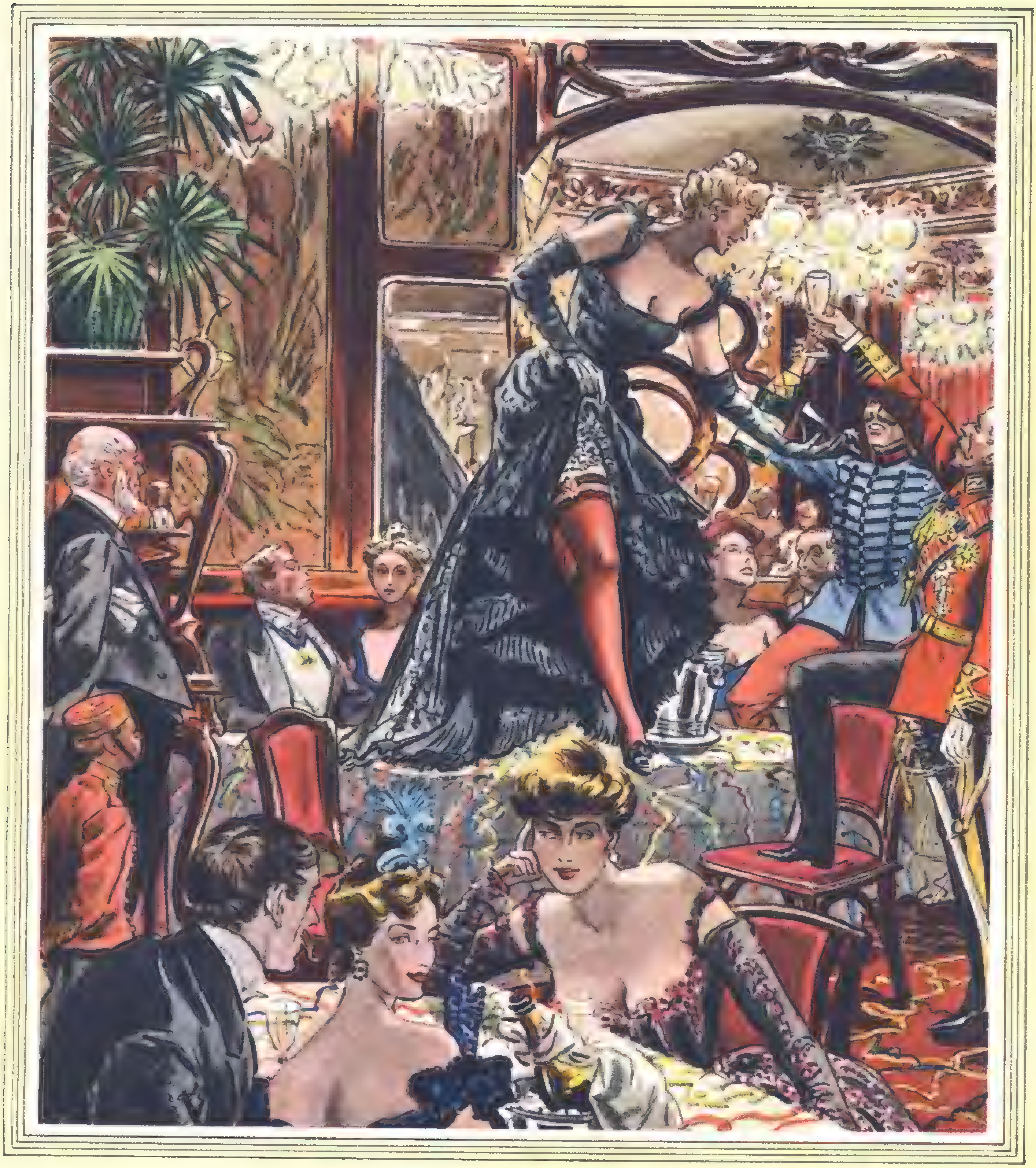
"To tell the truth, that's how I felt about you and me a few hours ago. I began to write a poem about it. But I couldn't finish it because the whole thing is a lie. What I *can* do for you is vindicate your attitude that love stinks, that it is false and tricky, and to marry another man because you admire him and he can give you a home and position is a decision of true dignity and feeling.

"Of course I desire you. I desire you because you are the most attractive (*Continued on page 171*)

GLANTZ

Mopsy and Her Wealthy Momma

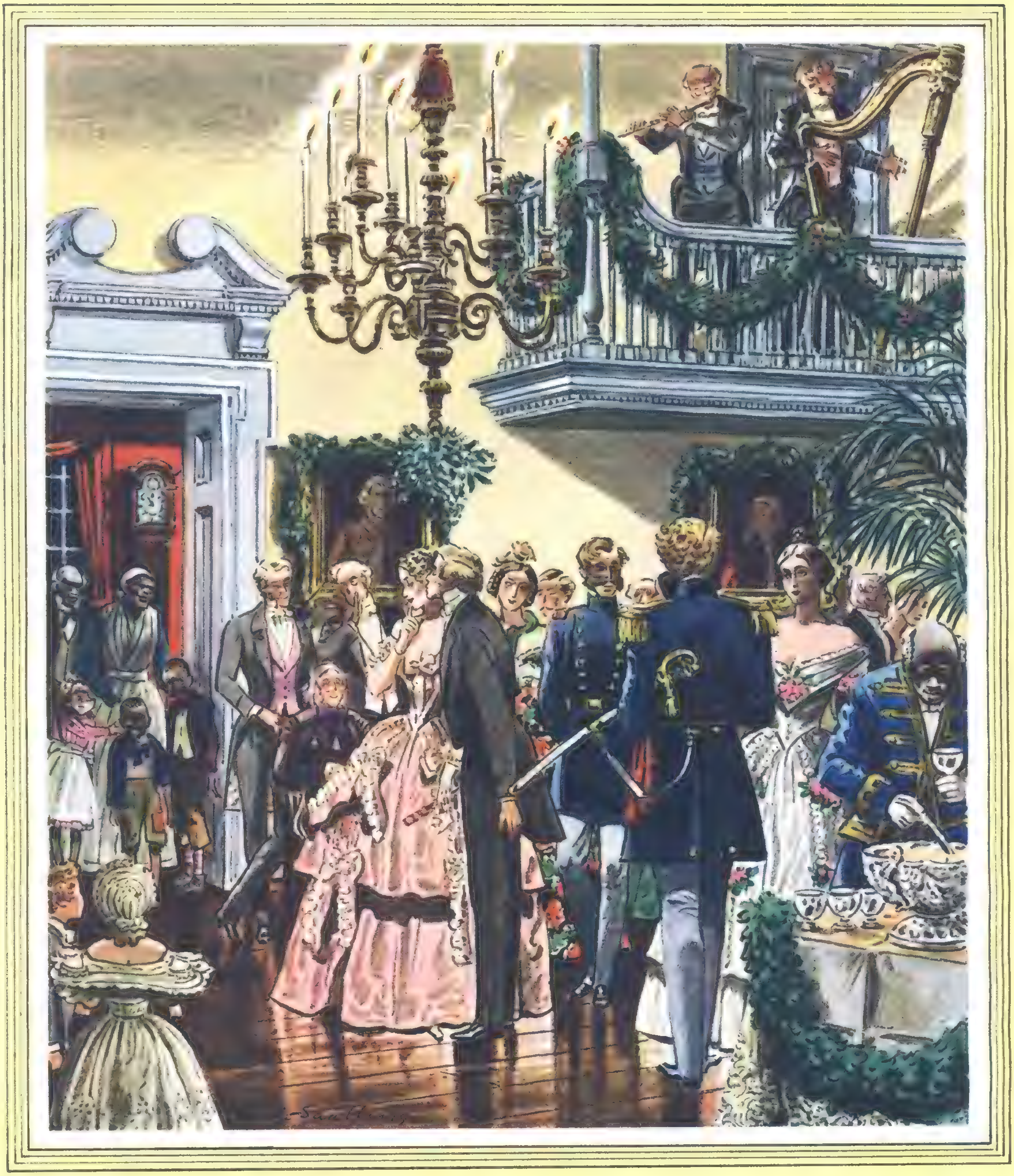
Gladys Parker was once chosen the most beautiful child in Towanda, New York. Since then she has branched out somewhat. No contest has been held, but it's reasonable to assume Miss Parker is the most beautiful comic-cartoonist in the business. The fact is, Mopsy, her cartoon-strip heroine, is a self-portrait. As everyone knows, Daisy Mae is not a picture of Al Capp nor Copper Calhoun drawn in the image of Milt Caniff. Mopsy's momma studied dancing until she was fourteen, then osteomyelitis put her on crutches and she started sketching. She invaded the Big City with a foot-operated sewing machine in 1927; her creations decorated the prohibition dollies at Texas Guinan's and the Silver Slipper. She decided drawing Mopsy, now syndicated in eleven countries, was less hectic, more profitable.



NEW YEAR'S EVE AT MAXIM'S

PAINTED ESPECIALLY FOR ESQUIRE BY LESLIE SAALBURG

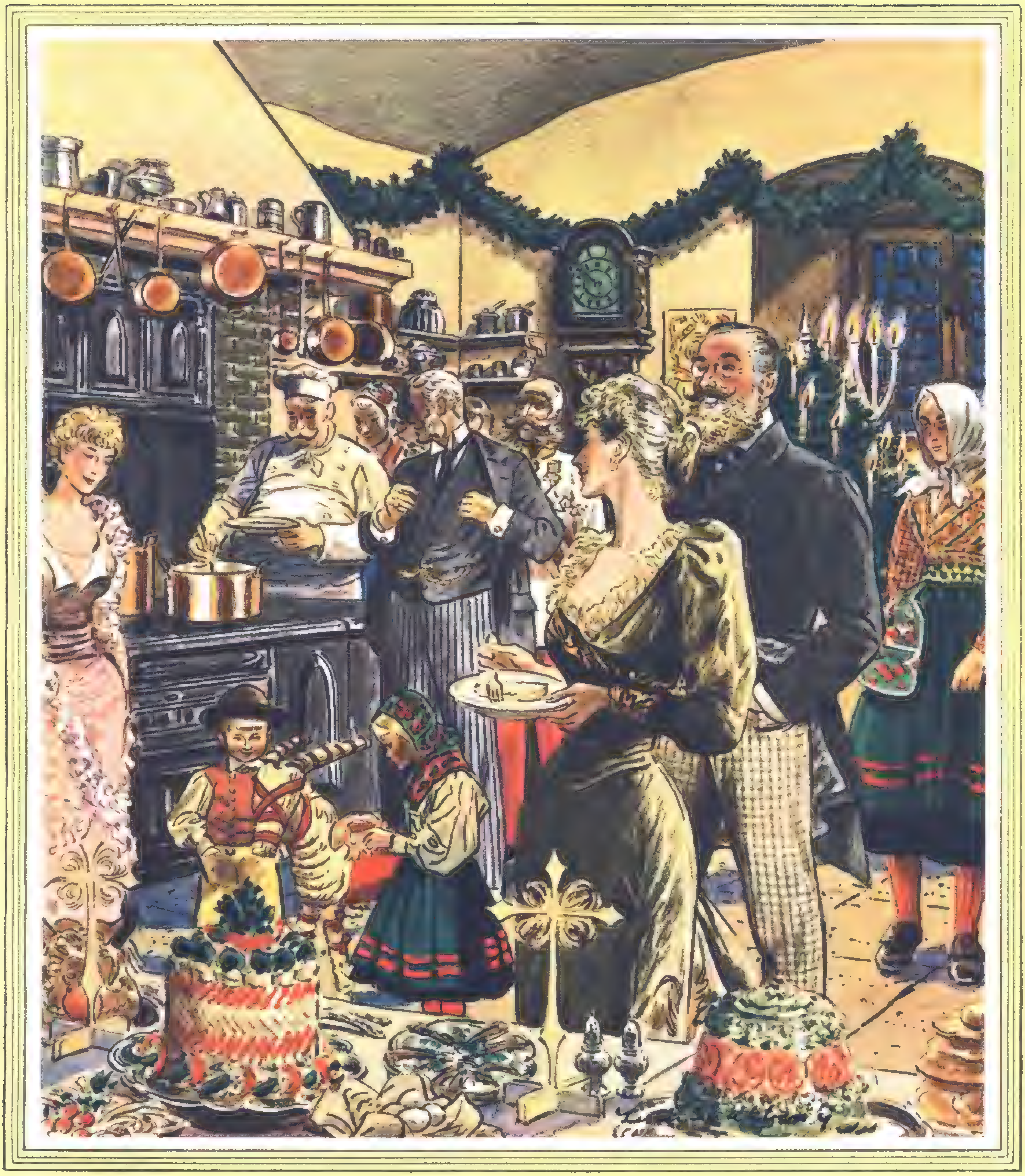
This is Paris at the turn of the century, and Maxim's, which the lovely ladies and their moneyed admirers make the most exciting café in the world. Here is the tinkle of wineglasses, the titled gentlemen bravely twirling their mustaches, the diamond-studded shirt fronts. And here the famous ladies, daringly gowned, sipping champagne and laughing the New Year in. Remember?



HOLIDAY COTILLION: AN ANTEBELLUM PLANTATION

PAINTED ESPECIALLY FOR ESQUIRE BY LESLIE SAALBURG

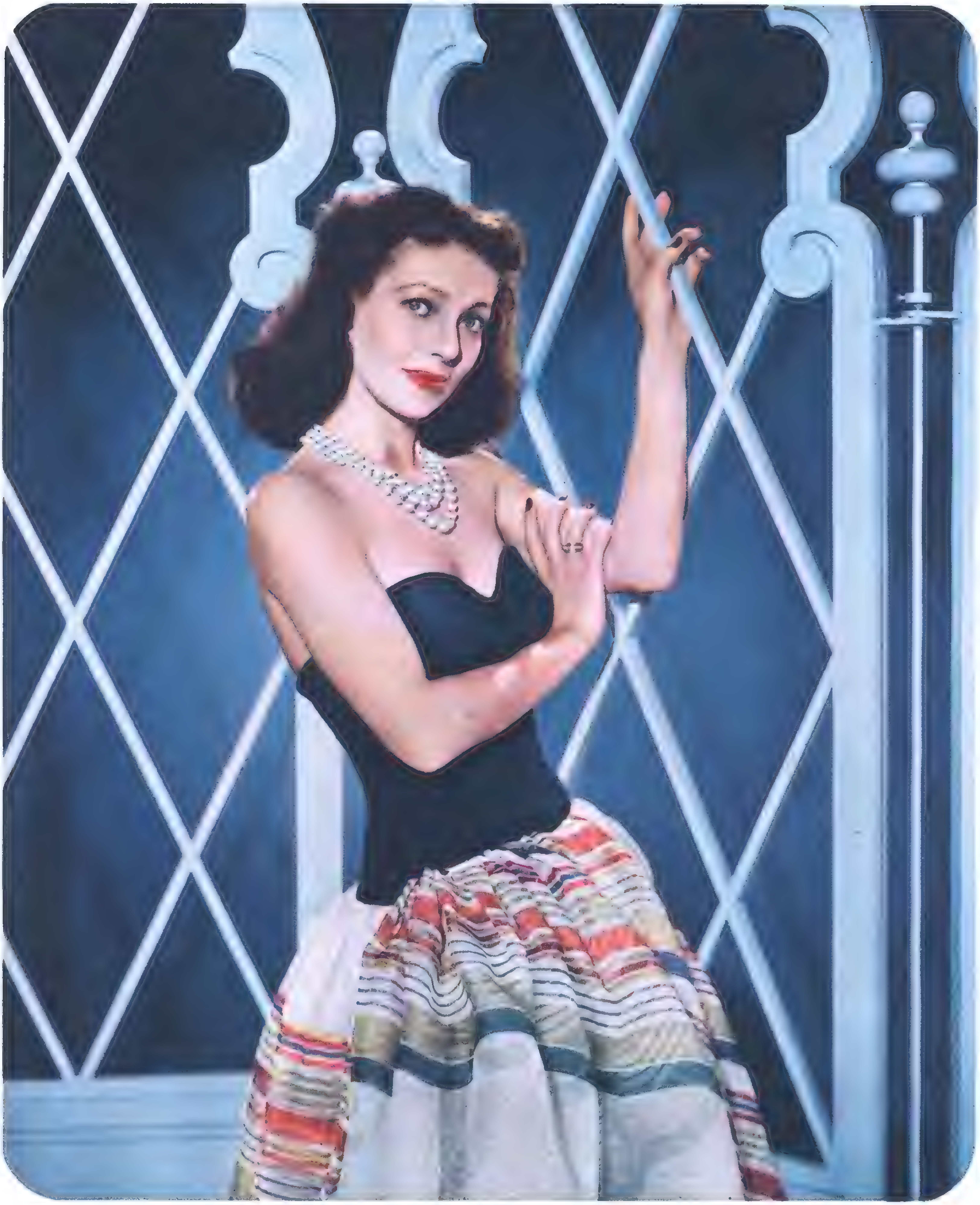
The musicians poise. There is the rustle of crinoline, and the scent of magnolia is heavy in the air. There are the bright uniforms, the flash of polished scabbards, the fine cream tones of eggnog on a glistening silver ladle. The great belles move across the polished floor, gliding in their enormous skirts. And under the mistletoe a shy gallant dares to kiss a lovely lady.



CHRISTMAS EVE IN A SWEDISH MANOR HOUSE

PAINTED ESPECIALLY FOR ESQUIRE BY LESLIE SAALBURG

When the great evening arrives everyone crowds into the kitchen where the *lutfisk* and ham are waiting. The *julbocken*, a goat sometimes alive, often of straw, is brought in bearing the gifts. You dip your black bread into the kettle where the juice of the ham is simmering, but before you can begin to stuff yourself from the *smörgåsbord* table, tradition rules that you must make a rhyme.

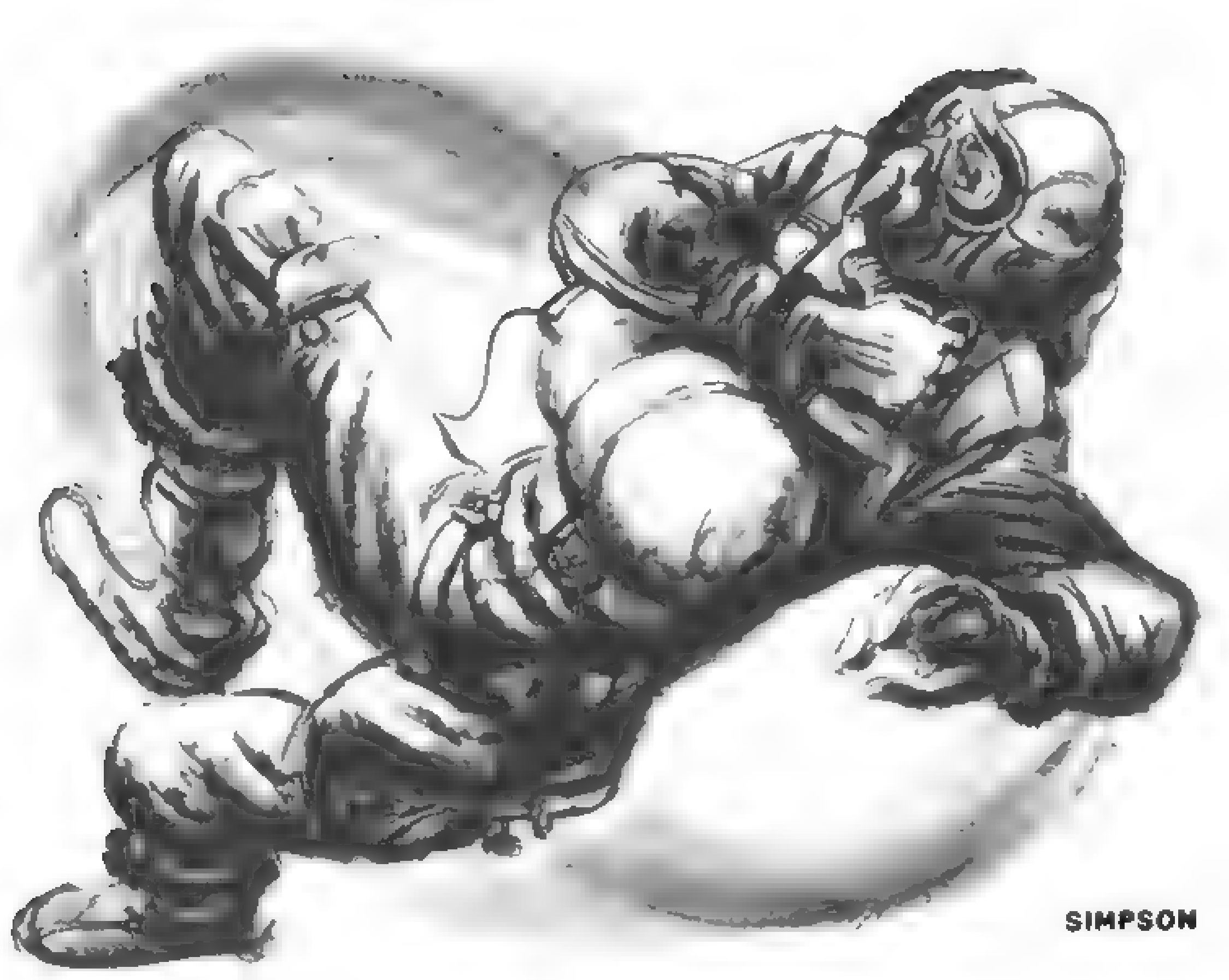


ANGEL'S ANGEL

Loretta Young

Photograph by Hal McAlpin

In *The Bishop's Wife*, produced by Sam Goldwyn, to no one's surprise Loretta Young appears with the heavenly charm you perceive above. To be the wife of a bishop, as any choirboy can tell you, is a difficult task even for a girl with the figure of an angel. In fact it is not until a heavenly messenger, Cary Grant of the inappropriately devilish eyebrows, takes over that a proper blend of ecclesiastical and domestic bliss can be achieved. While the bishop mends his idealistic fences against the onslaught of materialism, Angel Grant takes over the more worldly aspects of life in the cathedral close, such as getting the cathedral built and taking Loretta skating. The bishop, thus so delicately assisted and threatened, is David Niven.


SIMPSON

The Delayed Drop

A man could find the courage somewhere to help him jump from eight miles up, but Michael had plenty of time to think about the other things

by MARTIN BEAVER

The plane had leveled off at 43,000 feet. Michael Arne lay on his back at full length on a narrow flat cell under the floor of the cabin behind the pilot room; he felt as stiff as a mummy for his whole body had been wound round with bandage tape. Over his ordinary soft-leather flying outfit he wore a special overall suit of thick leather, terminating in heavy boots and gloves. The thick suit was electrically heated from batteries in the back. He wore a steel-and-leather helmet fitted with earphones, throat talkie and a respirator with tubes leading from two small oxygen bottles strapped on his thighs.

Wide bands passed around his chest and shoulders, down his body and under his legs, holding two huge parachutes resting against his stomach and on his back. A cardiograph and pneumograph to record his physical reactions and a tiny transmitter and automatic ciné camera for documenting his adventures completed his equipment.

On the cabin floor above, two officers knelt, one speaking into his microphone while the other was busy checking the diver's equipment. Meanwhile, inside his narrow prison Michael waited to make the jump that would smash the record for a delayed parachute drop.

Michael had made jumps at all hours and in all kinds of weather, but ever new to him was the step out from the plane into space, the sudden wrench as the parachute burst open above and then the long glide downward, looking, godlike, upon the pattern of the land below. As the earth angled up, there was the anxiety of selecting a landing place, and the work of maneuvering the billowing folds of the parachute as a yachtsman handles his sails.

But this would not be a parachute ride, but a violent plunge. It was to be his maximum effort and he realized the dangers.

The last instructions were given by the officer through his mouthpiece and then came the final check: "Ready!"

Michael nodded. The bolts at his feet snapped and the slabs flew open. His head went back, the heavy weights at his feet dragged him out and he shot into the frozen air like a bomb.

Eight miles to plummet downwards! Michael's head buzzed, a flood shot into his brain and for a while he was blinded. The trouble passed and although he did not seem able to breathe, he could see quite clearly the orb of light on the barograph and altitude indicator strapped on his chest and sticking up in front of his face.

He was alive all right; another small dial just over his heart showed the speed of his descent: he was traveling at nearly 250 feet per second and accelerating rapidly straight down to earth! Slowly the slender black needle crept toward the bright red mark at which he knew he would have to jerk the ripcords.

Michael's eyes smarted but he dared not close them. His whole body was as tense as a guitar frame and his nerves strung like wires. A tremendous roar surged in his ears. 10,000 feet! 8000! 6000! Only a portion of an inch now separated the black needle from the red band. When the needle touched that band he would pull his ring.

A maniacal inspiration seized his delirious brain: suppose he did not pull the ring? Suppose he just went on falling! The needle had now touched the red mark and the record for a delayed drop was his. But suppose he carried right on and made a record which no one else would ever be able to break! *Suppose he went straight on to the very end!*

"No! No!" he shouted; he wrenched inside his prison of metal and leather and with a jerk tugged desperately at the little ring.

His heart was in his throat, his head was on fire and his eyes went black. The red band had been passed! He had pulled too late!

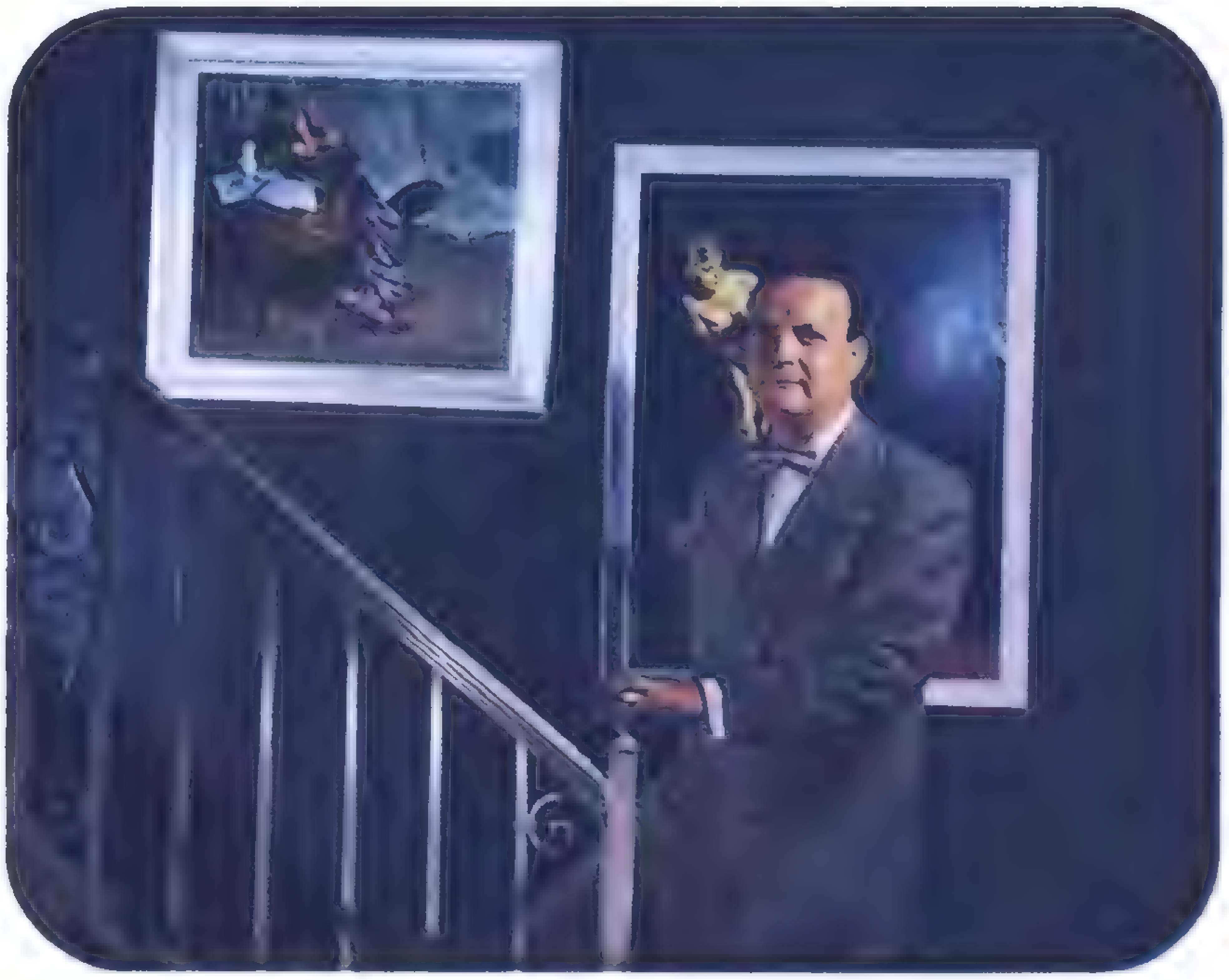
Then he remembered the last-moment instructions from the officer in the plane. He drew in his muscles, forced his mouth wide open and yelled for all he was worth!

"Oh God!" His head went back and his bloodshot streaming eyes stared upwards. Away above in the blue he still saw the long rippling white streamer that had followed him all the way and which was intended to lend out a tiny umbrella which was in turn to tear out the folds of his huge double parachutes. But the headlong fall continued . . . Too late! Too late!

Then a terrific flash sped across his eyes and a knife spasm filled his whole body. He went out in pure, raging desperation! *This* was the end . . .

He was a stricken thing, helpless, mute, inane—a nothing. But wait . . . life came into him again for a moment. Something had happened! Yes! Away above him he saw the space again—and a miracle! Separating him from the steel blue of the heavens were huge circling masses of white that seemed to fill his universe.

Michael's tremendous sigh of relief was a prayer of gratitude. His head fell forward, and floating, floating down, he wept like a child. #


GLANTZ

Behind the Pictures: Barry Stephens

In one of the great McCormick mansions on Chicago's Gold Coast you may wander from room to room and see here a gorgeous model draped in front of what appears to be a football player making like an artist, or there spy a fast ping-pong game under the gilt and rococo of a faded era. This is Vernon-Stephens-Hall, a venture of the pleasant, husky guy you see above, who spends much of his time finding such inspirational quarters for the ranking illustrators in the country, and then fetching up the art assignments which fill the pages of America's magazines. His main office is on Park Avenue in Manhattan, by coincidence only a step from the offices of the big magazines and agencies where dynamic Mr. Stephens conducts his enterprises and talks about the Giants in a deceptive Southern drawl.

Sandero was a shrewd fight manager unless sentiment for an old pal, or a new blonde, confused his judgment

The Baltimore Story

by BARNEY NAGLER

FAULKNER

The first time I heard of Paul Sandero was back before the war. Not loudly at first, but just in whispers, including the story of how Sandero had threatened to throw another fight manager out of a seventeenth-floor window because he had pulled a double cross.

The papers never reported the incident, so I took it for granted the double-crossing fellow escaped. It was the only time Sandero failed to keep his word. Except if you count the Baltimore story.

As he walked up Broadway each night, he always had a following of panhandlers. Paul was a soft touch, but he knew it. "Geez, ya can't forget all the time spent with those guys," he apologized. To Sandero "time" meant one thing: Prison hours.

Maybe that's why Sandero took the Baltimore fight for his middleweight boxer, Porky Smith. Porky would get peanuts for a purse and Sandero always said: "Ya can't buy steak with peanuts."

But the Baltimore promoter was an old pal. So Paul matched Porky with Pete Lovelock and Baltimore fight fans were given the privilege of paying upwards of $12,000 to see the bout. Porky Smith was the favorite; he should have been, too, because he was the better fighter.

Sandero didn't get to Baltimore for the bout. He was detained in New York by a tiny blonde who checked hats at the Trocobamba. Sandero checked his hat early that evening at her apartment and she didn't go to work at the night club. She played hookey with Paul.

It was along about 11:30 that night when Paul reached out of a soft chair for the phone and called Baltimore.

"Why, those dirty rats," he sizzled into the phone. "Those dirty low-down rats. I'll fix 'em. Stealing a decision from my Porky. The pigs. I'll take care of 'em."

The last the tiny blonde saw of Sandero that night, he was rushing out of the apartment. He forgot his hat in his haste.

Walking up Broadway, Paul figured it out. The two judges and referee were the promoter's pals. Sure, it was clear to Sandero. The underdog wins and the promoter and his pals clean up in the betting. The next morning, Sandero put in a call for the Baltimore promoter.

"Hello, Pal," he said when the call came through. "Ya shoulda given us a better break in that fight last night."

The promoter stammered. "Believe me, Paul, it was on the up-and-up. Your fighter got licked. I wouldn't do anything to hurt you, Paul."

"Yeah, I know you wouldn't cross me," Paul said. "So look, give Porky another fight with that fellow. Make it two weeks from now, and we'll show you who's the better fighter. Porky or your bum."

"Sure, Pal, sure," the promoter promised. "Sure, it's set, two weeks from last night."

That afternoon he collected his share of the purse from Porky Smith. "Ya won't need much training for this one. Ya should be in shape, ain'tcha?" Sandero said. Porky just grunted.

A fortnight hence, Sandero went to Baltimore with Porky. Lovelock was the favorite, as befits a conqueror. The odds were 2-1 and the Baltimore boys were betting plenty. Sandero took every bet he could get. So did the promoter, Paul's pal.

Porky Smith came out fast that night. He danced around Lovelock in the first round and struck straight lefts into his foeman's face. The crowd cheered the underdog in the perverse way of the sporting public.

Lovelock was flustered, but in the second round a strange sight confronted him. Porky changed from his stand-up style. He came out in a crouch. He covered up as Lovelock lashed out with left hooks. In an instant Porky was down. The referee began counting . . . one . . . two . . . Porky was up, but he took another left to the head and a right to the midsection. He stumbled for an instant under the onslaught, but recovered to throw a few punches. Then a light left to the nose put Porky down for the full count. He was the loser once again, this time by a knockout.

Porky recovered amazingly fast and soon was out of the ring. As Lovelock left the squared circle, the crowd gave him a good hand. He had scored two victories in a row. Paul Sandero just trailed behind the fighters. He walked into Porky's room slowly and the fighter looked up and smiled.

"Ya did a great job, Porky," Paul said.

Porky beamed.

Suddenly the door to the dressing room burst open. The promoter, Paul's pal, rushed in. "Why, you dirty rat," he sizzled. "You pig. You put your guy in the tank tonight. That cost me ten grand, you rat. I was betting on your guy tonight."

"That's funny," Paul said, smiling. "I was betting on your guy."

Paul got out of Baltimore on the first train he could catch. The next night, as he walked up Broadway, he was especially kind to the panhandlers. He even went back to the tiny blonde's apartment to get his hat. And he paid the hat check too. ⌗

MILLER

Built-in Beach

Ex-marines, soldiers and sailors who went through the Pacific island-hopping business sometimes hit the dirt at first sight of Tahiti Beach. Conditioned reflexes, however rusty, force their eyes over tall coconut palms and palmetto-thatched shelters, searching for the prodding muzzle of a sniper's rifle—despite the fact that Tahiti Beach is on Biscayne Bay, in comparatively safe Coral Gables, Florida. Its grass-skirt atmosphere was carefully planted by owner Paul U. Gerber, described by a Florida neighbor as a "businessman who is also something of an amiable beachcomber." Like so many of us, vicariously beachcombing, Paul Gerber dreamed of settling on a South Seas island. The businessman in him prevented his going to the South Seas—so the beachcomber brought the South Seas to him.

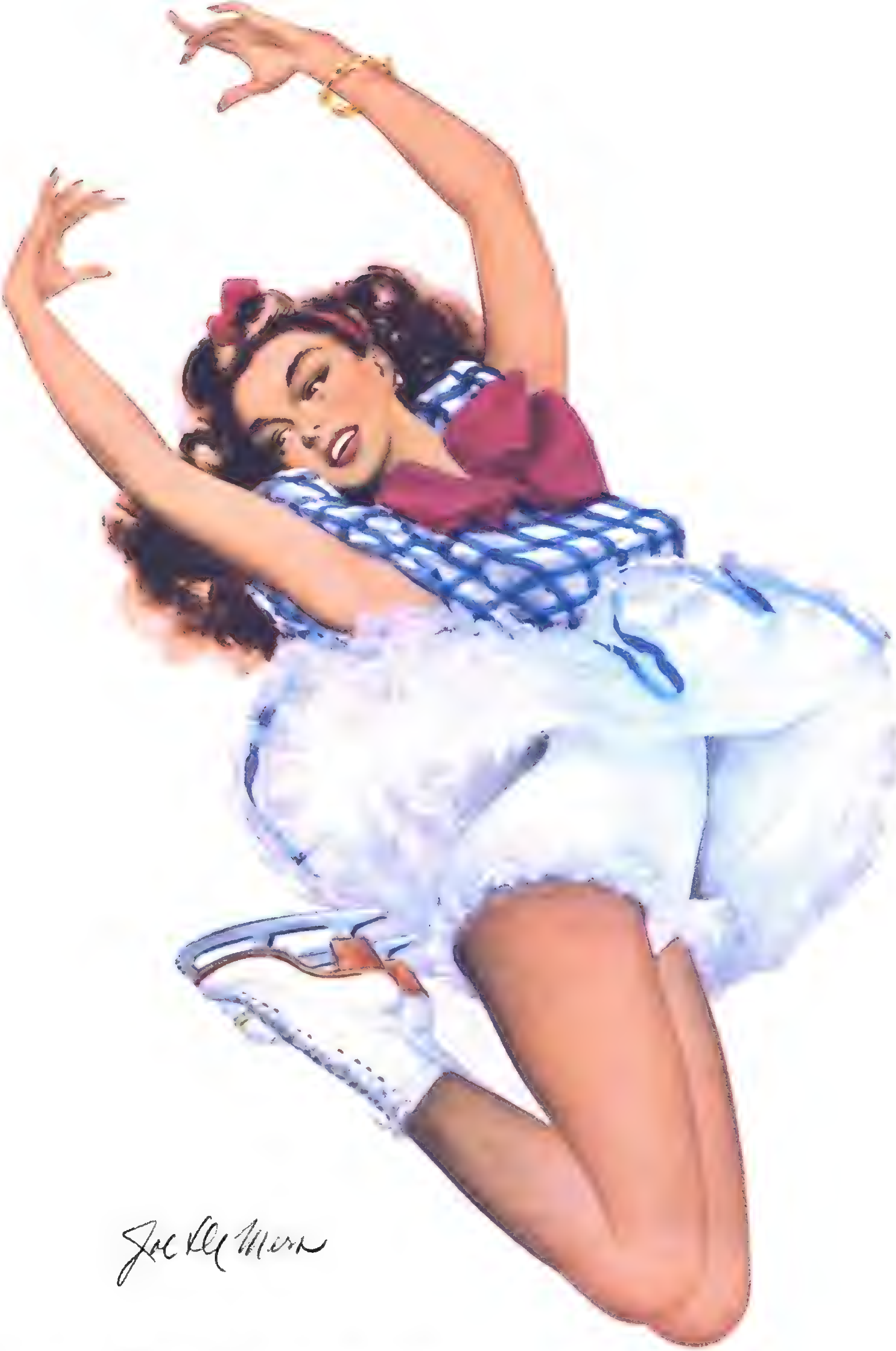


Figure Eight by JOE DE MERS

When a young lady of the above interesting persuasion takes to the blades and the ice, it is usual for the customers to exclaim: "Ah, what grace!" "A flawless entrechat if I ever saw one!" and other hypocritical and mealymouthed cracks which miss the point by a ton of ice cubes. The fact is that an equally graceful kangaroo or a bowlegged man who could skate figure eights around our little star still couldn't fill one boxload of customers at a nickel a seat. The truth is, gentlemen, and we must face it happily, that the girl has terrific legs, lovely arms, dream hair, and it's just plain fun to watch this collection of attractions move around, on or off the ice.

Charles L. Zabriskie, New York City

Dave Rose, Hollywood, California

Vincent Astor, New York City

Vaughn Monroe, Boston, Massachusetts

Howard R. Parsons, Bay Shore, L. I., New York

Oliver S. Redfield, Greenwich, Connecticut

RAILROADING IS A MAN'S GAME

Above you see six full-grown executives proving life can never take all the boy out of a man. These men took the highball while in knee pants and are still in pursuit of the perfect model train. Mr. Zabriskie's train took 2000 hours to build. Mr. Rose's engine is an exact copy of the Royal Scot. Mr. Astor's railroad, for which he is manager, engineer and trackwalker, usefully transports firewood and supplies from the Bermuda railroad to the house. Mr. Monroe builds tiny trains, for they are easier to carry about the country. Mr. Parson's locomotive is said to be the most perfect of its kind, precise in every detail. Mr. Redfield's layout is the most elaborate with its 800 feet of oval track, 1000 of straightaway, and 50 feet of tunnels.

WM. DuBOIS

Radio comics grow sad or glad, songsters and sponsors change their tunes, according to pronouncements from this supersalesman

Mr. Hooper Counts Ears

by JOHN KEATING

The most powerful voice in radio is the emphatic rumble of a 49-year-old New Englander, Claude Ernest Hooper, whose name is a household word and whose semimonthly "Hooperatings" are the most eagerly awaited edicts in the frenetic universe of broadcasting.

A radio large shot would as soon appear in public without a hand-painted necktie as without his copy of the latest edition of the *Hooper Pocket Piece*. This is a small, green-covered booklet in which are condensed the survey satrap's estimate of the relative popularity of every network commercial program. In the strident towers of Radio City and the plush Park Avenue offices of the leading advertising agencies, Hooper's listings are The Word.

The ratings are based on a random sampling of popular taste in radio entertainment, taken during the first and third weeks of each month by 1500 Hooper reporters in 76 different cities. Most interviewers are ex-telephone operators because, as Hooper says, "the Bell system turns people into perfect automatons." Hooper snoopers average 9,000,000 calls a year.

The principal products of all this feverish activity are the "Network Program Hooperatings," compiled from the reports of 36 cities, all served by the four major networks. The reporters ask four questions: "Were you listening to your radio just now?" "To what program were you listening?" "What station, please?" and either: "How many men, women and children are listening?" or "What is being advertised?"

The answers are air-mailed to the New York office to be tabulated, and run through a gantlet of International Business Machines which milk them for a dozen statistical purposes. The results include the percentage of sets in use throughout the day, the share of the available audience tuned in to each network program and station, and the relative popularity of all programs. They constitute an inflexible yardstick at which even the greatest tremble.

Danny Kaye, for example, may be a 24-karat Golden Boy at a movie box office and a night-club attraction guaranteed to panic the dourest customer. In radio, he's just another guy whose option wasn't renewed after he developed Hooperanemia. Even Frank Sinatra couldn't combat a low Hooper. His program last year hovered around 8 or 9, contrasted with the 25 or 30 which Bob Hope, Fibber McGee or Fred Allen consistently poll. When the Voice's contract ran out, the sponsors announced they were dropping the show, simply pointing to the Hooper graph for explanation.

A high Hooper has an equally strong effect. Sponsors had shied away from Al Jolson for years, but when his guest appearances on the Bing Crosby show zoomed that program's Hooperating to its highest peak, the executives did a quick about-face and rushed to Al with a contract dripping gold from every clause.

Currently the whole industry is in a dither over a suggestion from several important sponsors that they pay their stars on a sliding scale based on Hooper ratings rather than on a flat salary basis.

The almighty power of his rating in selecting the fare provided for the radio public has brought a storm of criticism down on Hooper.

The more excitable do not hesitate to place the blame for what they call "radio's infantile, sterile, timid and imitative output" squarely at the door of Hooper's elegant, midtown Manhattan offices.

"All we do is count noses," Hooper counters. "If a sponsor pays $10,000 a week to advertise his product, he has a right to know what per cent of the listening public hears his message."

This business of counting noses—or, more precisely, ears—for radio advertisers has become a highly competitive trade. It is impossible for a radio performer to know whether he is addressing millions of people or, literally, talking to the breeze. This uncertainty breeds insecurity among sponsors. Thus networks have sought proof that beyond the studio's rock-wool-lined walls there does exist a real, dollar-owning audience.

So advertising agencies and sponsors formed the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting and hired market researcher Archibald M. Crossley. Crossley's minions called people on the telephone to ask leading questions about the programs they had heard. The CAB is gone now, but there remain about half a dozen audience-measurement outfits tilling radio's fertile soil. Among them, Hooper stands pre-eminent. He may be no expert statistician but is the industry's most aggressive fighter.

The essence of the tycoon type, Claude Ernest Hooper is a husky, dynamic individual of average height and way-above-average drive, who is almost continually on the move. He fishes in the spring and summer in the Catskills, the Utah lakes and rivers of Oregon. In the fall, he follows the duck and grouse season and, when winter comes, he takes off for the ski slopes of Canada.

The handsome, silver-haired ear-counter has a fondness for word coinings like the ear-catching Hooparade and Hooperating. In referring to himself, Hooper uses the imperial *(Continued on page 188)*

WORKMAN

Night Club: Press Agent's Dream

In the language of the press agent, anyone who is able to say Mama at the age of four is a prodigy. That is, if the orator happens to be a client of the agent. To such a citizen, Fanchon, the after-dark dervish pictured above, is a pure delight. At the age of four she not only walked but danced. This caused her proud parents to hustle her off to ballet, piano and elocution lessons. She learned to speak distinctly and play the piano on key, but, says her press agent, she felt that dancing was a more expressive medium. A decision eminently worthy of a prodigy of four. Began dancing professionally at fourteen. Still does.

Since oil tankermen play as vigorously as they work, keeping them harmlessly amused in such ports as Caripito poses a problem

SIMPSON

Jungle Café

by PHILIP HARKINS

WATER-FRONT cafés, whether on Lime Street, Liverpool, South Street, New York, or La Cannebière, Marseille, all seem to repeat the same old story. Sailors get drunk in them, brawl in them, and squander their money in them.

But there is one café that tells a different tale. This café squats on an oil dock at Caripito, sixty miles up the San Juan River in the sweating jungles of Venezuela. Tropical rains are a daily occurrence, but the heat never diminishes. Below the dock is malarial muck. Near it grow lovely orchids, fat bananas, and fields of towering sugar cane. In the San Juan glow huge electric eels, and crocodiles snap their dripping jaws. Caripito is a tropical museum and the jungle café is its observation platform.

To a tankerman walking off a broiling oil dock, the café is a thing of wonder. It is long, narrow, cool and clean. Electric fans hum symphonically, and white-coated waiters pad about, taking orders for ice-cold beer and sandwiches. Viewed against its desolate setting, in the steamy, lush loneliness of Caripito, the jungle café seems almost incredible. Tankermen who enter it for the first time stare open-mouthed at its cool comfort and ask, "Where did this place come from?"

It came from a crisis. To tanker captains, Caripito had always been a humid headache, and not only because the river was so narrow at that point. Skippers liked to leave Caripito on schedule, for waiting at the mouth of the river was a treacherous sandbar, to be crossed only when the tides were right. But tanker captains couldn't leave on schedule if their crews were not safe aboard.

Ordinarily, shore leave for tankers is short and sweet. Tankers load fast and have a quick turnaround. But Caripito got on tankermen's nerves; orchids and eels offered limited amusement for sailors. A mile or so away was the American oil colony. It was too prim for rough-and-tumble tankermen. Equally distant was the native town—and it was too primitive. So the crews wandered disconsolately off into the jungle, overstayed their shore leave, got into fights, and eventually came back to the ship with broken heads and sometimes with malaria. It was a tropical mess.

Subsequently shore leave was tightened up and a shack was erected on the dock where tankermen could buy beer. Resentful at being restricted, unimpressed by the homely shack, the tankermen declared war on everybody, including themselves.

The harassed manager of the shack had a statistical turn of mind. One night when a tanker was in port he saw the crew drink 249 bottles of strong Venezuelan beer. He watched and marveled. Then the men, understandably exhilarated, started throwing the bottles. The manager ducked. In the course of one month he dodged forty-three magnificent free-for-alls. Finally he gathered up his notes and fled, as tankermen tossed some Venezuelan guards into the San Juan.

This international incident brought the crisis to a head. A conference was called. Executives of the oil company, Creole (a branch of the Standard Oil Company), turned to United Seamen's Service, an outfit that operates seamen's clubs and is financed by operators and seamen themselves. USS proposed the establishing of a jungle café right on the dock. Following forty-three free-for-alls this suggestion seemed somewhat silly.

But on the little island of Aruba, another branch of Standard Oil (Lago) had been delighted with the pacifying effect of a USS tavern. And the USS psychology seemed logical: "Give tankermen a decent place ashore and they'll use it and respect it." So with the old shack as a foundation, the jungle café was constructed.

It opened with a bang in the Fall of 1944. The bang came from one tankerman's fist colliding with another tankerman's jaw. The rest of the crew began to take sides and disaster threatened. However, the USS manager persuaded the two belligerents to tie on sixteen-ounce gloves. The fight became a farce, accompanied by jeers and sardonic suggestions from all hands. After two rounds of cushioned clouting in the soggy heat, both brawlers were exhausted.

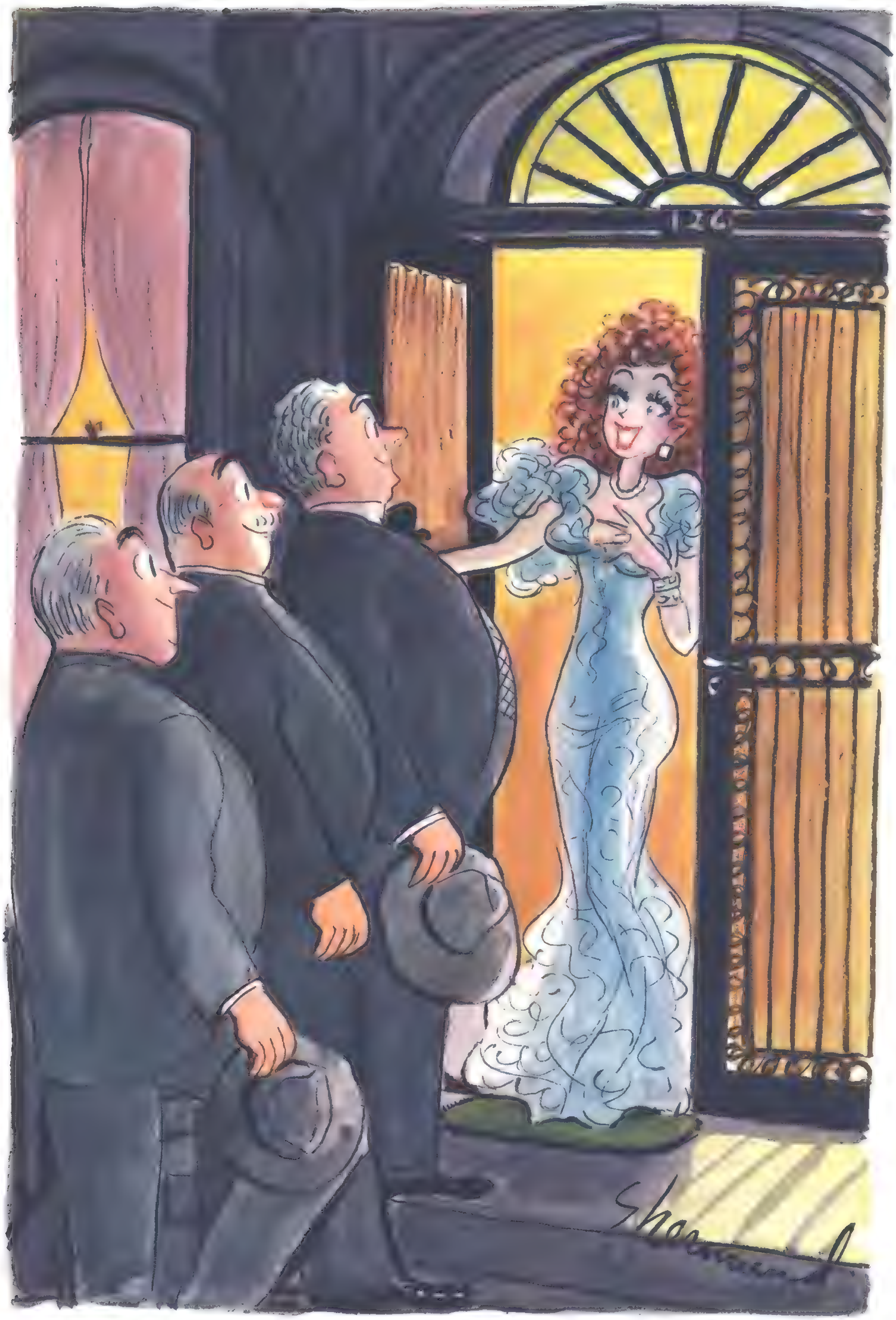
But the program to keep the tankermen harmlessly amused was not all so quick and simple. Managers imported from the States wore out under the eternal heavy heat and the limitless demands on their tact and patience. One left, confessing that his nerves were shaky. Another departed precipitously without explanation. But more missionaries arrived. The latest and longest term has been served by a slight, ingratiating fellow named Howard George. George is an ex-army officer from Beverly Hills, California. When some hard-boiled oil men at Caripito heard about this combination they wondered who would tear the new manager apart, the tankermen or the crocodiles. But Mr. George has thrived and so has the jungle café.

And when it becomes time for a loaded tanker to sail from Caripito, in order to catch the tide at the mouth of the San Juan, all the captain has to do is to send someone out on the bridge to whistle the crew aboard from the cool and pleasant interior of the amazing jungle café. ⌗

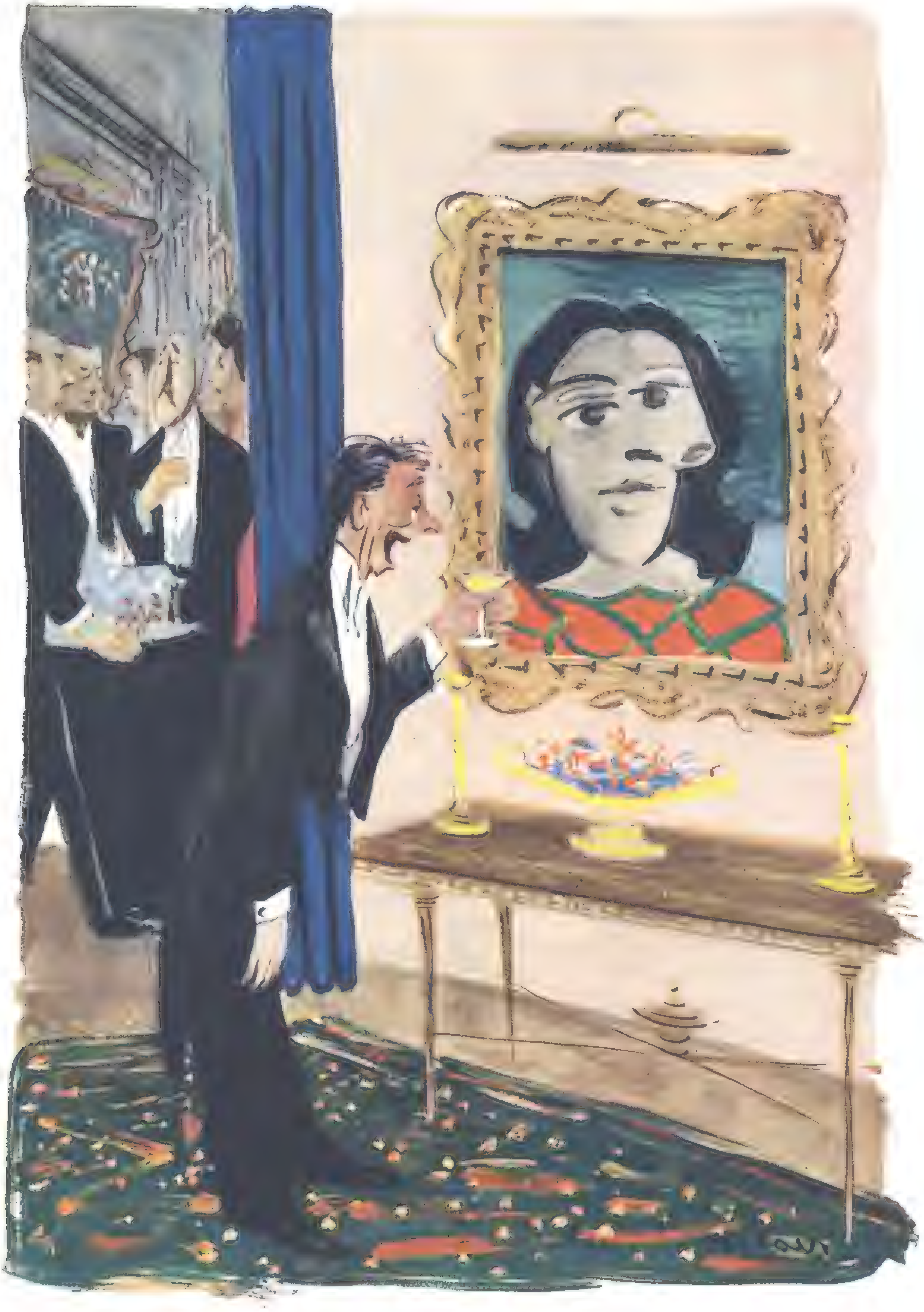
POWOLNY

Esquire's Lady with a Future (II)

Every year thousands of girls win thousands of beauty contests and automatically begin to think about becoming movie stars. One girl in ten thousand actually gets inside a studio. Twenty-year-old Jean Peters is the one girl. Miss Peters won a campus beauty contest at Ohio State. Now she is not only welcome inside a studio, but is a star in her first picture, Captain from Castille, *opposite Tyrone Power. Miss Peters makes her cinema bow as a peasant girl who becomes involved with the noble but democratic Mr. Power. She gets him in the last reel, too. Twentieth Century-Fox feels that's a future for any girl.*

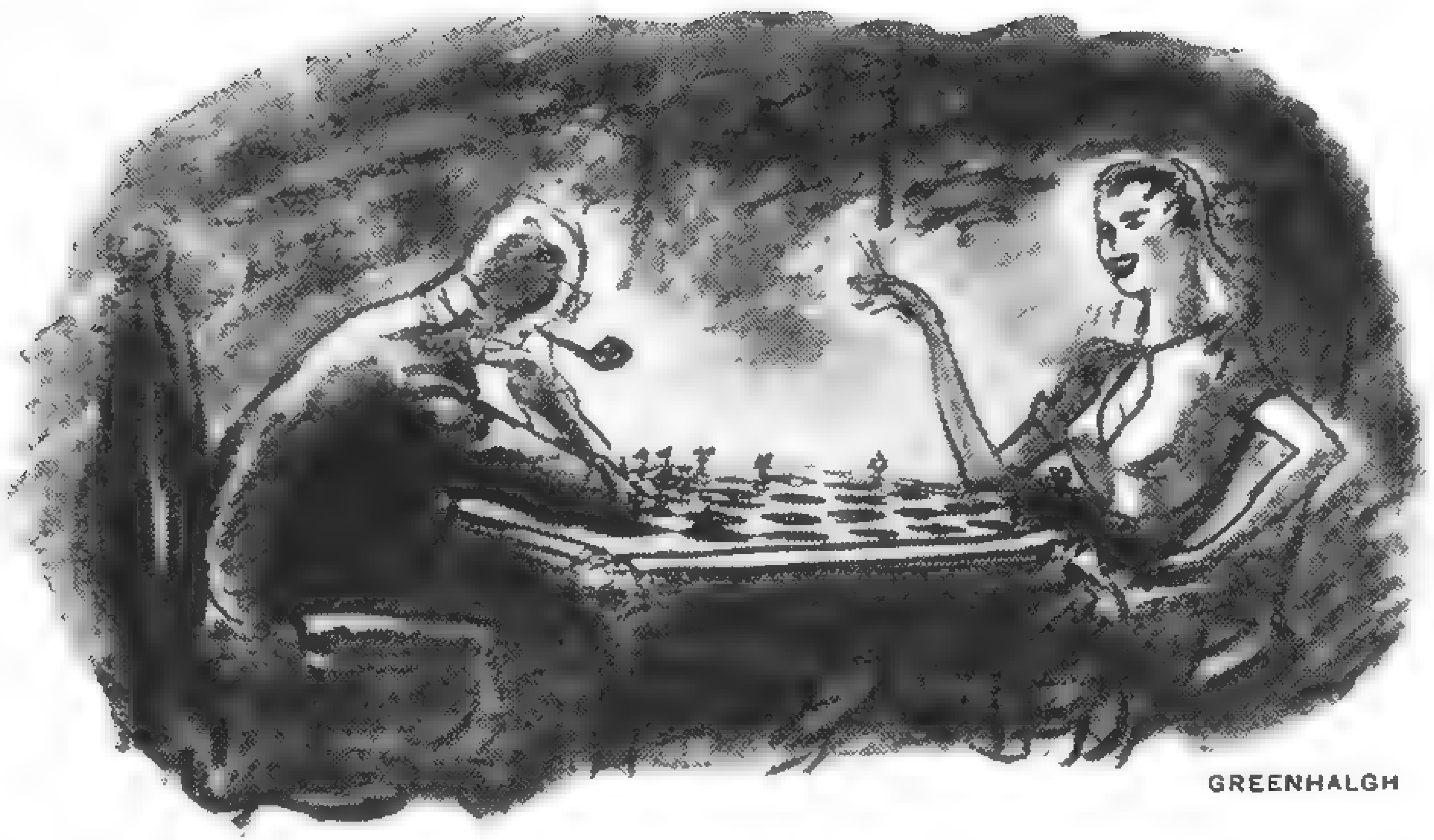


"You mean little me? A senate investigation?"



"Boy! What have you been drinking tonight?"

The Lady Says "Check!"



After the boredom of his easy victories at the Manhattan Chess Club, Sierpenski was ready for any diversion, even Rosy

by MARTIN GARDNER

"Chess players? Bah!" snorted Sierpenski. "Not a heavyweight in the lot. Like nincompoops they played. I haven't got even a headache." Sierpenski was the champion chess player of the world. We had just left the Manhattan Chess Club where he had won a blindfold exhibition match against fifty of New York's best. Half the players, including me, were defeated in the first fifteen moves. The champion sipped his coffee. "It is so dull, playing with such amateurs. I'd rather play tiddlywinks with my little girl."

I waved to Rosy and held up my empty cup. Rosy was a fluffy blonde waitress with blue eyes and a blank face.

"Did you want something?" she asked, coming over to the booth.

"Yeah," I said. "Coffee." Rosy wasn't very bright.

"Even the Russians," Sierpenski was saying, "are playing no good. If only would come along a real player."

I was watching Rosy when the champion made his last remark. Suddenly I had a great idea, which I confided to Sierpenski in low tones. "Magnificent!" he exclaimed. "Tonight we will work it out."

Three months later the chess world was startled by news of a blonde lady chess expert discovered in the heart of Flatbush.

Here's how we managed it. In my pocket I carried a small wireless set that would send and receive code. The reception was silent, but you could feel a vibrating key with your fingers and get the dots and dashes. Sierpenski carried a similar set.

I was a spectator at all of Rosy's games. The champion stayed off the scene, in some other part of the building. I signaled the moves to him, he would signal back, then I would communicate with the blonde by prearranged gestures. If I scratched my nose it meant move the bishop. If I pursed my lips, it meant the knight, and so on.

Of course we paid Rosy well for her role in this elaborate hoax. The hardest part of it was teaching her the signals.

Since Sierpenski did the actual playing, Rosy naturally won all her games. She would sit there and powder her nose and pretend to study the board, but always watching me out of the corner of her eye.

The champion had the time of his life. He began to experiment with fantastic openings. He would, for example, give away his queen on the second move, or advance his king six paces in the opening.

Rosy's curious style attracted world-wide attention and the little chess reviews featured scholarly commentaries on her games. Before the year's end she had captured the American crown and was in line to challenge the master himself.

Her final challenge to Sierpenski made the front pages of every newspaper in the country. Arrangements were made to hold the match in Madison Square Garden, with Sierpenski getting about half the take and Rosy and I splitting the remainder. From a ringside seat I would get the signals and relay them to Rosy. The champ would keep the game fairly even for some sixty moves, to build suspense, then retain his title by a sensational combination play that would make chess history.

"What'll become of me afterwards?" Rosy asked.

Sierpenski shrugged his shoulders. "You were first a waitress. A waitress you can be again."

Madison Square Garden was packed to the rafters for the match. The radio networks were broadcasting play-by-play accounts, including television. A gigantic chess board had illuminated pieces visible from any seat in the arena.

The champion started the game with a conventional Ruy Lopez opening. Rosy's response (played by Sierpenski) was to jump out her two knights on the first and second moves; then on the third and fourth she hopped them back to their original squares. The crowd went wild. On the sixty-fifth move I began to guess the champion's strategy. He had worked out the game so that on the seventieth play he would announce a brilliant checkmate in twenty moves. Rosy was to study the board a moment, then turn over her king and resign.

After the sixty-ninth move Rosy glanced toward me for the signal. I blew my nose and scratched behind my right ear. That meant she should advance her rook forward three squares.

She studied the board, then slowly pushed forward a pawn.

"Check," she said. She punched her time clock emphatically, opened her purse, and began to put on fresh lipstick.

A confused murmur swept the crowd and began to swell in volume. I stared at the big illuminated board. Suddenly I saw it. A simple, obvious little three-move checkmate!

The champion's face was scarlet. With a shaking hand he knocked his king flat on the board. The match was over.

Naturally, after the match, Sierpenski was furious. The checkmate had been an accident, of course, but Rosy had made the false move deliberately, to throw off the champ's careful calculations. She had picked up just enough of the game to know a check when she saw one. She had no idea that her move would win the game.

"My reputation—she is already ruined!" Sierpenski wailed. "We must have a return match immediately—if not sooner."

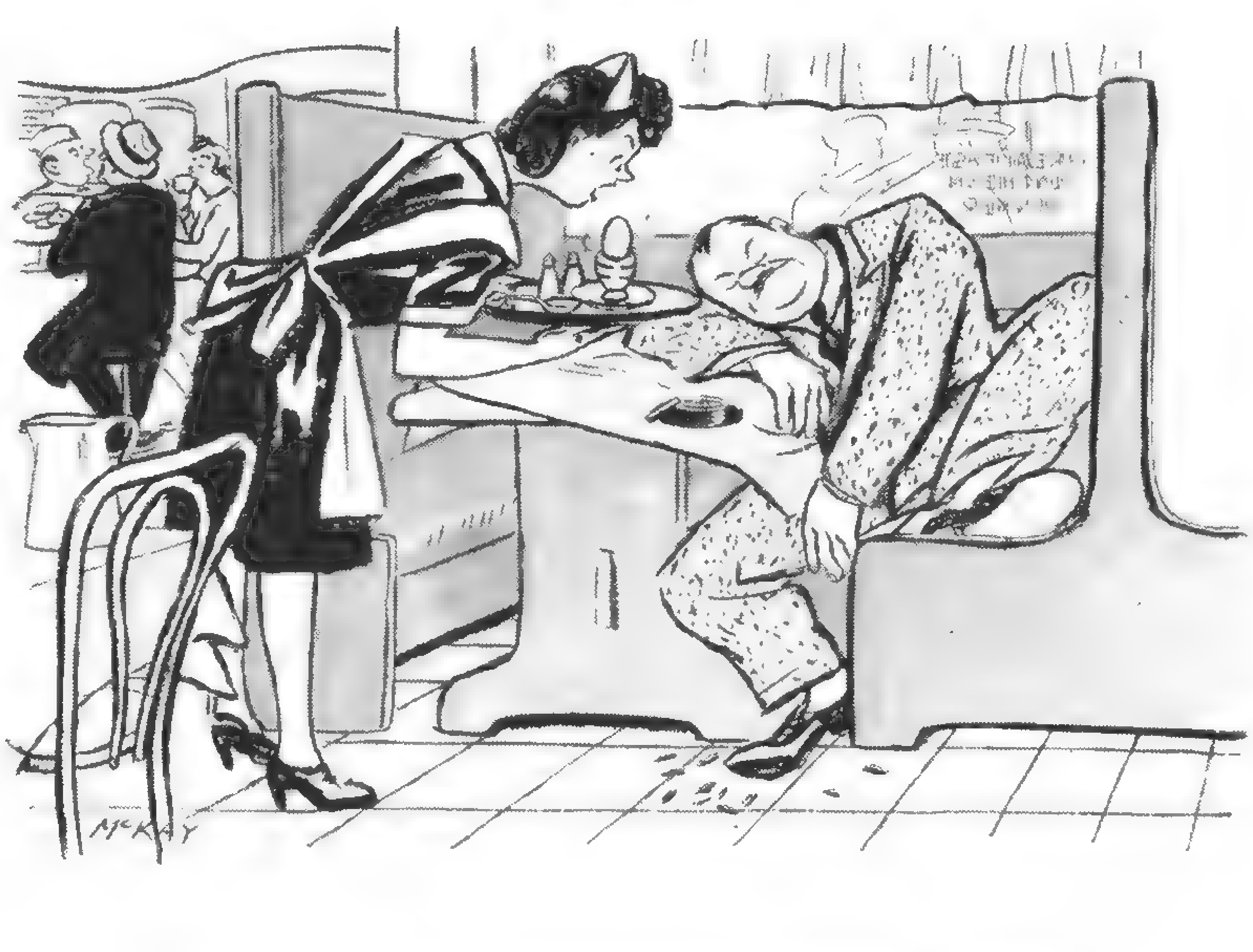
Rosy shook her head. "I'm retiring," she said.

She retired all right and made herself a fortune. First she endorsed a cigarette. It steadied her nerves, she stated, during the rigorous tension of tournament play. Then she made a movie short on *Etiquette at the Chess Table.* At the moment, her name appears on a ghostwritten mystery called *The White Pawn Murder Case.*

Sierpenski tried to explain our joke, but nobody believed him. In his next tournament he was trounced in one round by an eight-year-old wizard from the Bronx. Everybody at the Manhattan Club beats him. A few days ago I beat him myself.

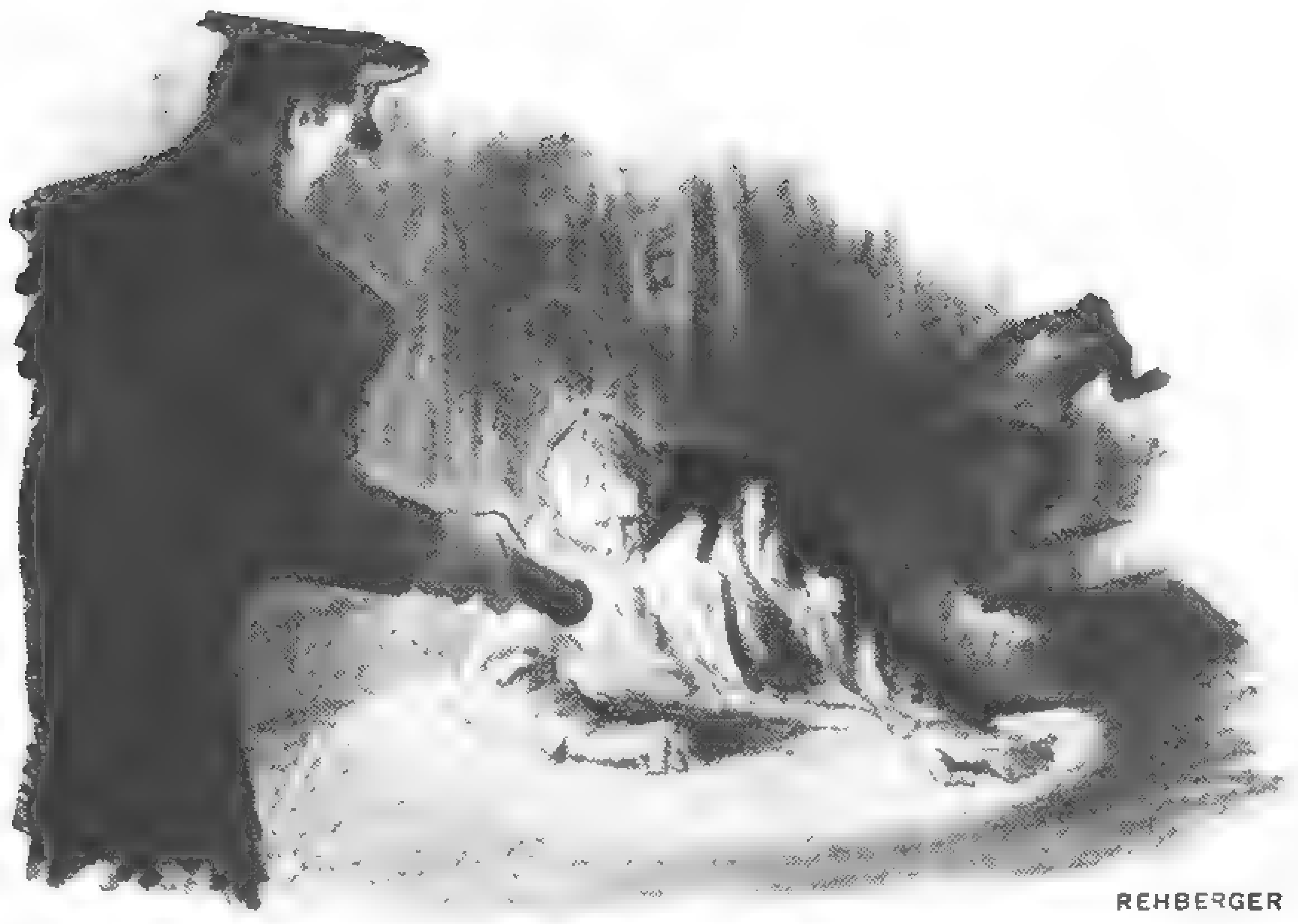
The last time I saw Rosy she invited me up to her suite at the Waldorf and asked me to teach her the game. She had gotten interested in chess, she said, and wanted to learn more about it.

I spent hours trying to teach her the strategy of elementary openings. It was no use. She just didn't have the mind for it. ⌗



"Wake up, sir, your three-minute egg is ready"

Even a cop has his weak spots and Nick remembered vividly how the neighborhood bully used to push him around at school



The Good Arrest

by BENJAMIN SIEGEL

The patrol car stopped at 180th Street and Park Avenue and Nick Pendil got out. McGinnis saluted casually with his nightstick and took Nick's place in the car. Nick stood and watched until the red taillight was lost around Webster Avenue.

He ran the stick along the railing and leaned over to look down at the tracks. Park Avenue, in the Bronx, a street where trains run.

Nick walked slowly up the hill toward Washington Avenue. This was the dead part of his beat, a few crumbling houses, a few semi-factories. Not much here to steal, nor excuse to break the law.

He looked at his watch and hurried toward the call box. Nick opened the box, waiting till the hands on his watch stood precisely at twenty minutes after twelve. "Patrolman Pendil, Post 8, Box 17."

"Okay," said the sergeant's voice. "Nothing for you."

Across 3rd Avenue, with the Elevated structure bulking behind him, the neighborhood began to get familiar. This was where he had been brought up. He hadn't been here for ten years.

The stores began, huddling together under the crushing pile of apartments. They were lifeless now, unlighted, without people and loud voices. Candy stores and barbershops led the rest. Italian-American grocery. A sign: *Latticini-Freschi*. Paint store, A & P, drugs, hair stylists. A tailor shop, a delicatessen.

He stopped short, holding his breath, his body a tight receiver for sound. He heard it again, like a yelp, cut off short. Nick began to run, transferring the stick to his left hand.

A figure broke from an areaway, wheeled away from Nick, disappeared into a doorway. Nick flashed a light, then kneeled beside the white-haired man on the ground, who sat up and felt gingerly at his neck.

"What happened?" Nick asked, helping him get to his feet.

"Somebody came up behind me, pulled me in here. Choked me."

"Take anything?"

The man felt his pockets. "No. I guess you scared him away in time."

"You feel all right?"

The little man felt his neck again. "Yes. Thanks. I'm all right."

"Were you able to see what he looked like?" Nick asked him.

"No," the old man replied. "He was behind me all of the time."

"You wait," Nick said.

He went into the doorway. He turned his flash toward the stairs, at the space on either side. Then he came out and winked as he passed the shivering old man. "Just hold it for awhile, Pop."

Around the corner Nick stood in a doorway and waited. He had it figured: he had run from the cops himself in this neighborhood, in buildings and over the rooftops.

There was movement at the entrance to the next house. A man came out quickly and started to walk away. Nick was behind him, revolver pressing against his neck, his other hand with the nightstick dangling from the wrist tight on the man's collar.

"You're going the wrong way. Let's see if that old guy you jumped can't recognize you."

"What's going on?" the man asked, his shoulders stiff. He craned his neck and Nick stood back, letting him turn around. The man looked at Nick in a slow, puzzled way.

His face was red and bloated and there was a long scar down his left cheek. His coat was form-fitting and he had on a pearl grey hat with a wide brim, white roll collar and very bright tie. But the face peered out above the finery like a diseased turtle.

He stared hard at Nick and then smiled, relieved. "Nicky! Old Nicky Pendil! So you're a cop now. What do you know."

"You've got to come back around the corner, Eddie," Nick said.

"Ah. Nicky. It was just a mistake. I'm going with this guy's daughter. She's nuts about me, see?" The look on his face made Nick grimace. "But he won't let her go out with me. I just wanted to talk to him, find out what the score was."

"You jumped him," Nick said.

"Well, maybe I got a little excited. But he's not hurt. I'll make it right with him. Darn nice to run into you, Nick, darn nice. You drop around sometime, huh? We'll have a few beers for the old days."

He gave Nick a queer smile, with the lips moving more up and down than stretching sideways, and he turned and walked away.

Nick let his revolver drop and replaced it in the holster. He watched until Eddie was gone around the corner.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
DEDINI

The old man shrugged as Nick came back alone. "So? He got away?"

Nick nodded.

"It's a shame. They're like animals, these men who prowl around. They should not be loose."

Nick took out his notebook. "Would you give me your name, please?"

"Why? He got away, and I cannot describe him—"

"Just for the report."

"All right, then. Albert Samuels, 9110 Monterey Avenue."

"Married?"

"Yes."

"You—have you any children?"

"I have a son. He lives in Queens."

Nick felt the next question shape in his mind, but he didn't want to ask. It came out so quietly the man didn't understand and asked Nick to repeat it. Samuels said, "No, I have no daughters."

"Would you like me to see you home?"

"No, thanks," Samuels said. "I'll be all right, now."

Nick watched him walk away, a little man with thin shoulders. Every once in a while his fingers went up to feel at his throat.

Nick called up to make his report. No, there was no identification of the man. He felt shame in his throat like a regurgitated taste.

"Okay, Pendil. Better luck next time. And if you run across any of those muggers, take the wraps off. Your mealtime is in twenty minutes. You don't have to call in before."

He walked slowly, swinging his nightstick, trying to justify his part in the incident. A favor to an old friend. It happened all the time. Sure, another guy in the same position would have done the same thing.

Underneath, clogging his thinking, was a mass of old, unformed suspicions. As if he had behaved as he had for reasons other than he would admit. He didn't want to examine them.

A patrol car stopped beside him.

"How you doing, kid?" Wilson was sitting next to the driver. He was the patrolman with whom Nick had done his field work out of the Academy. He smiled at Nick with a kind of mentorial pride.

Nick said, "Everything pretty quiet along here."

"Yeah, it's a quiet beat."

"How can I make a good arrest if nothing happens?" Nick grinned.

Wilson said: "You remember what I told you, Nick. The Department isn't looking for no heroes. Something comes up, you go after somebody, make sure you're clear behind."

"I remember everything you said," Nick said.

The driver said, "Better roll."

Nick turned away. High heels tapped in the stillness, and the girl looked at him curiously as she passed. Nick got a queer feeling of time unwinding and he thought of speaking to the girl in G. I. German and looking through his pockets for a bar of chocolate. Then his uniform was blue again instead of khaki. He resumed his patrol.

He came to the cold grey building, a block square, in front of it the fenced-in yard. He looked up at the chiseled letters: Public School 599. He thought of Mr. Parkinson, neurotic eighth-grade teacher, screaming, "Pendil! You're doing it again!" and snatching up the copy of Frank Merriwell from behind the history book, tearing it across and flinging the pieces down on Nick's desk. The gang, six of them, waylaying Mr. Parkinson in the corridor after school hours. They had tripped him and borne him down by weight. It should have been enough. But one of them had kicked him, shouting obscenities; he would have kicked anybody who was lying helpless on the floor.

The memory had been buried for a long time and it came forth with the mold and the smell of its burial place clinging to it: Eddie, the boy who had kicked Mr. Parkinson. In the schoolyard, pushing against Nick's chest with the heel of his hand. Nick being shoved back against the fence. He could see Eddie's face close to him with the scar running down from the corner of his eye. Given him, the boys knew, by his father, drunkenly enraged that he had had anything to do with his birth.

The boys waited. Nick tried, but he couldn't make himself fight Eddie. He couldn't fight someone who could not be depended upon to stop, who would knee and kick and tear with blood in his eyes.

No, it hadn't been a favor to an old friend. He sucked in his cheeks and spat, but he couldn't get the taste out of his mouth.

Nick crossed the street and went into the big all-night cafeteria. The man behind the counter had a thin, eager face behind heavy glasses. He squinted at Nick. "Well!" he said.

"Hello, Herb," Nick said, smiling. "Still working for your old man?"

"Yeah. So you're on the cops. Like it?"

"Not bad. Tonight's my first solo. What's new with you?"

"Ah." Herb grinned. "I'm going to law school on the G.I. Bill. Put in a few hours here nights."

Nick shook his head in mock wonder. "What do you know, Little Herbie a lawyer."

They smiled and shook their heads, remembering.

"Any of the guys still live around here?"

"Most of the old gang moved away. Eddie Farmer's still around. You remember Eddie?"

"Yes, I remember him."

"You ought to," Herb said. "The way he pushed you all over the schoolyard when we were kids." He added quickly, "He did that to all of us. There was always something queer about that guy."

Nick ordered scrambled eggs and took them to the table. Herb brought over his coffee and sat down. Nick said, "What's Eddie doing now?"

"I don't know. From what I hear he keeps himself pretty well, but he doesn't seem to have a job." Herb grinned. "I shouldn't be telling that to a cop."

They sat for awhile in silence as if they had talked themselves out. Then Herb said, "There's a customer. I guess I'll have to go to work. You going to be on this beat for a while, Nick? I'll see you."

"Yeah," said Nick. "Sure."

Herb stood up. Nick said, "Uh, Eddie, he live in the same place?"

"Yes. His father died a couple of years ago. There were just the two of them, you know."

Nick smoked a cigarette and had another cup of coffee. He lighted another cigarette and slumped back in his chair, playing with the spoon, twisting it in his fingers and sliding it back and forth over the rim of his cup. He felt dispirited and dirty.

At the Academy you got the rules and the ordinances, you learned how to handle the people who broke them. Of course, there were some things without which you'd not even have taken the exams. You were in the age group, you were big enough, you liked the idea of being a cop. Of course. And there was courage. Just one of the things a cop had. Part of the equipment.

"I found the most wonderful bottles in the liquor store to put candles in!"

Nick got up and went to the phone near the cashier. He reported that he was through with lunch. He paid his bill and went out.

Before, there had been an occasional late worker hurrying home. This, now, was the ebb of the night. Even the stray cat had retired.

It was a question of weights. One distorted childhood fear against what his uniform stood for, the principle of the protection of the small. Nick found himself at the house without remembering the steps he had taken to get there.

The door lock was long since out of repair. He saw the name under the bell with the apartment number beside it. He went in and walked up the stairs. Nick found the door and put his finger on the button, but the bell didn't sound. He used the stick to tap on the door. He waited and tapped again and there was the sound of a bed creaking and heavy bare feet on the floor and a sleep-dazed irritable mumbling. The door opened a crack and Nick said, "Let me in, Eddie. This is Nick."

"What the hell do you want?"

Nick shoved suddenly and sidestepped into the room. He said, "Get your clothes on."

Eddie was in his underwear, a monstrosity with red eyes and rumpled hair. Nick closed the door and stood against it. "Get your clothes on," he said again, and his voice sounded then as if he were using no resonance chambers, just the breath whistling past his larynx.

Eddie said, "Get the hell out of here."

Nick said, "You can come walking or you won't be able to walk."

"Why, you—" Eddie moved a step toward him and Nick was looking at the scar and it was a long time ago. "Where do you get off talking that way to me? When you look at me there's green in your face, there always was, don't you remember?"

Nick remembered. He moved back, a kid in a schoolyard. The red face came closer, the hand pushing against his chest. Around them were the boys, waiting to see what Nick would do.

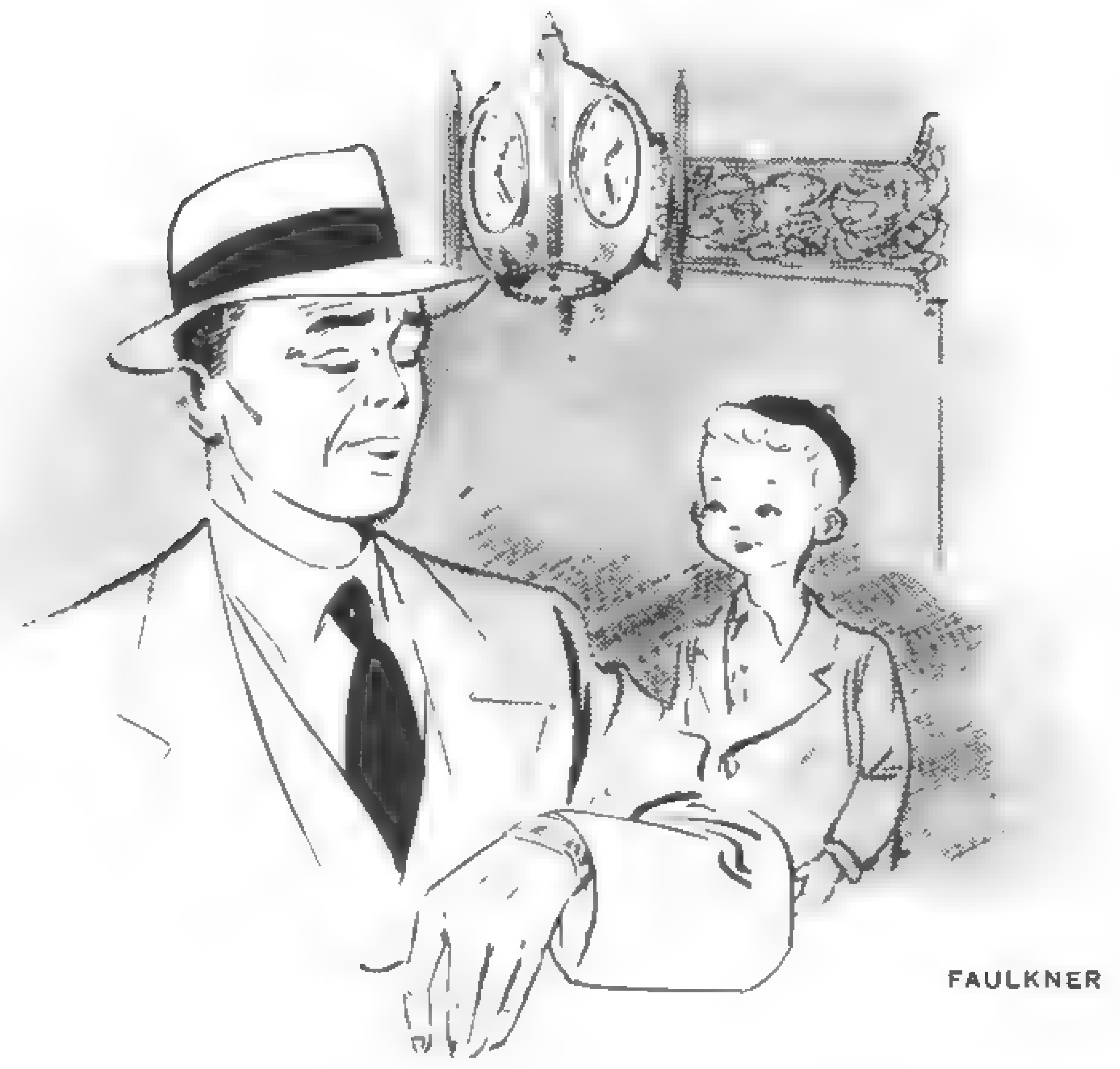
The hand pushed higher, against the shield, and Nick felt the edge of it against his body. The schoolyard faded and Nick moved easily and automatically, the voice of the instructor at the Academy saying, "You bear the wrist down and across and up, locking your other hand through the elbow." Eddie screamed suddenly and Nick released some of the pressure. He shoved and Eddie fell across the bed.

"Get dressed." Nick's voice was tired. He picked up the phone.

Downstairs Wilson was grinning broadly in the car. "So you made your good arrest, Nick?"

"The best," said Nick, "I'll ever make." ##

To keep a pact made years ago seemed silly, but the two had formed a strong friendship while they shared the peril of Guadalcanal



Full Fathom Five

by JOSEPH E. SHANER

Ed Tate took up position under the clock, absently brushing at his coat sleeve to glance at his own watch. One o'clock: an hour to wait. Self-consciously he tugged at his necktie, craning above the heads of the garrulous, pushing women shoppers, conning the undulating sea of faces. He wished some men waited, too. Swarms of women overwhelmed him, and it would be worse, Ed wagered, if the women knew he waited now to keep a date made five years before.

It was a silly notion, Ed admitted. A teen-aged youth spun out of the crowd and seized the arm of a pretty girl. The girl laughed, permitting the boisterous youngster to lead her through the crowd like a ballrunner on the heels of a good blocker. That would be young love, Ed observed. That's reason enough to wait under a clock for someone. People young and old would smile at that, giving a knowing wink. But the reason Ed was here? That was different.

When Ed boarded the Pittsburgh flight at Chicago he didn't tell Ruth too much, except that he'd promised this night to Bill Evans, a little reunion they'd planned one night on Guadalcanal. He didn't tell her he lacked Bill's address, nor that they were to meet, romantically she'd call it, under the department-store clock. He'd told her much about Bill, his closest wartime pal, but not that his 300-mile trip to Pittsburgh might be a fool's errand.

The shuffling of feet and clicking of high heels on the sidewalk, the honking of auto horns and grunting of brakes failed to dent Ed's thoughts. For a moment he went back to the humid green of the tropics. The deathly clatter of Washing Machine Charley's plane echoed across the black sky. Yellow-red flashes of fire from lately won Henderson airstrip rocked the dark world, and Bill Evans cursed. "Nights like this I love Pittsburgh most," Bill groaned in their foxhole. "Someday I'll show you my town. Downtown Pittsburgh—the Diamond—I'll buy you a drink in every bar. Pittsburgh's beautiful when the blast furnaces are lit up, and you're lit up."

"It's a place I never saw," Ed said.

"Okay, it's a date," Bill cut in. "Meet me under the clock where everybody in Pittsburgh meets. Let's see, this is December 31. Okay, 2 p.m., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on December 31, I'll grab every tab if you'll be there." Bill shoved out his sand-spattered right hand, and Ed grasped it, smiling. "Bunky," Ed said, "it's settled, but will you kindly tell me just what year that'll be?"

Bill laughed hard, rolling in the sand like he had the Guadalcanal twitch. Unseen planes droned overhead. "Make it 1947," he said. "The way the Japs are fighting it'll be 1947 before you're wearing polka-dot ties again. Make it 2 p.m., December 31, 1947, and I'll give you the Pittsburgh version of how to celebrate New Year's Eve."

It was 2 p.m., December 31, 1947, and Bill Evans hadn't showed.

Ed Tate felt silly again. A date like this could mean everything, or nothing. He was glad he hadn't told Ruth, but yet, in letters he and Bill exchanged for awhile after they split up on the 'Canal, Bill had urged him not to forget. Ed smoked another cigarette, and gazed at darkening skies where rain clouds suddenly convened, then at the store clock toiling its appointed course to 3 o'clock.

Women swarmed in and out of the store, many waiting for friends outside where it was not too cold. They'd wait a few minutes and then their friends arrived and they'd be on their way, clucking merrily. Ed strode back to the shop windows, looking over the tops of the bobbing heads. "I'd give $100 to see that guy shove his face out of that mob," he said to himself. "I could stand a drink."

It began to rain. Ed drew back into a doorway. Shoppers scurried under marquees and into buildings. Ed needed to smoke again, but the people were jammed so close he couldn't reach his coat pocket.

"Ouch!" Ed cried aloud, looking down at a boy of eight who'd stepped on his toes.

"I'm sorry," the boy said, looking up at Ed.

"It's okay," Ed replied.

"You're tall," the boy said. "How did you get so tall?"

"Like Topsy, I just growed," Ed said.

The woman with the boy looked puzzled and then she smiled. The boy asked Ed if he played football and Ed said, "Yes, a couple of years ago at the University of Illinois."

"Pitt could beat Illinois," the boy said.

"You're right. I'll bet. Do you go to Pitt?"

"Not yet. In a few years. We'll beat you then, too."

"No doubt. There's not much we could do to stop you, I guess."

The woman smiled again as the boy continued chattering. The rain diminished and the crowd thinned. Cabs carried the pushiest people away first, and the woman had trouble getting one. Ed and the boy discussed the Pirates and Cubs. Finally, the rain stopped. The woman called from the curb, waiting by the open cab door. The boy didn't hear her. She came back. "I'm so surprised," she said apologetically to Ed. "He never makes up to strangers."

"So long," the boy said. "I hope Illinois has a good team when I play for Pitt."

"We'll need it," Ed said. "Happy New Year."

"Happy New Year," the boy shouted.

Ed continued his vigil until after the stores closed. Reluctantly, he gave up. "I guess Bill forgot," he said. "What a sucker I am!"

Ed strolled away, lighting his last cigarette. "New Year's Eve in Pittsburgh and I celebrate by myself," he murmured, inhaling deep down of the cigarette smoke and cold, moist air. Dejectedly he found a stag bar, never knowing that Bill Evans, to whom he drank alone shortly thereafter, slept in honored glory under the seas surrounding Okinawa, and that Bill, who could not come, had sent his son to keep the date. #

For Christmas gift query answers, send stamped addressed envelope to Esquire Fashion Staff, 366 Madison Ave., New York City, 17.

Whether it be a wardrobe for a tropical holiday, some new turns in ski wear, or unfinished business at the gift counters, Esky is right there and in good style

Good Grooming Habits for the New Year

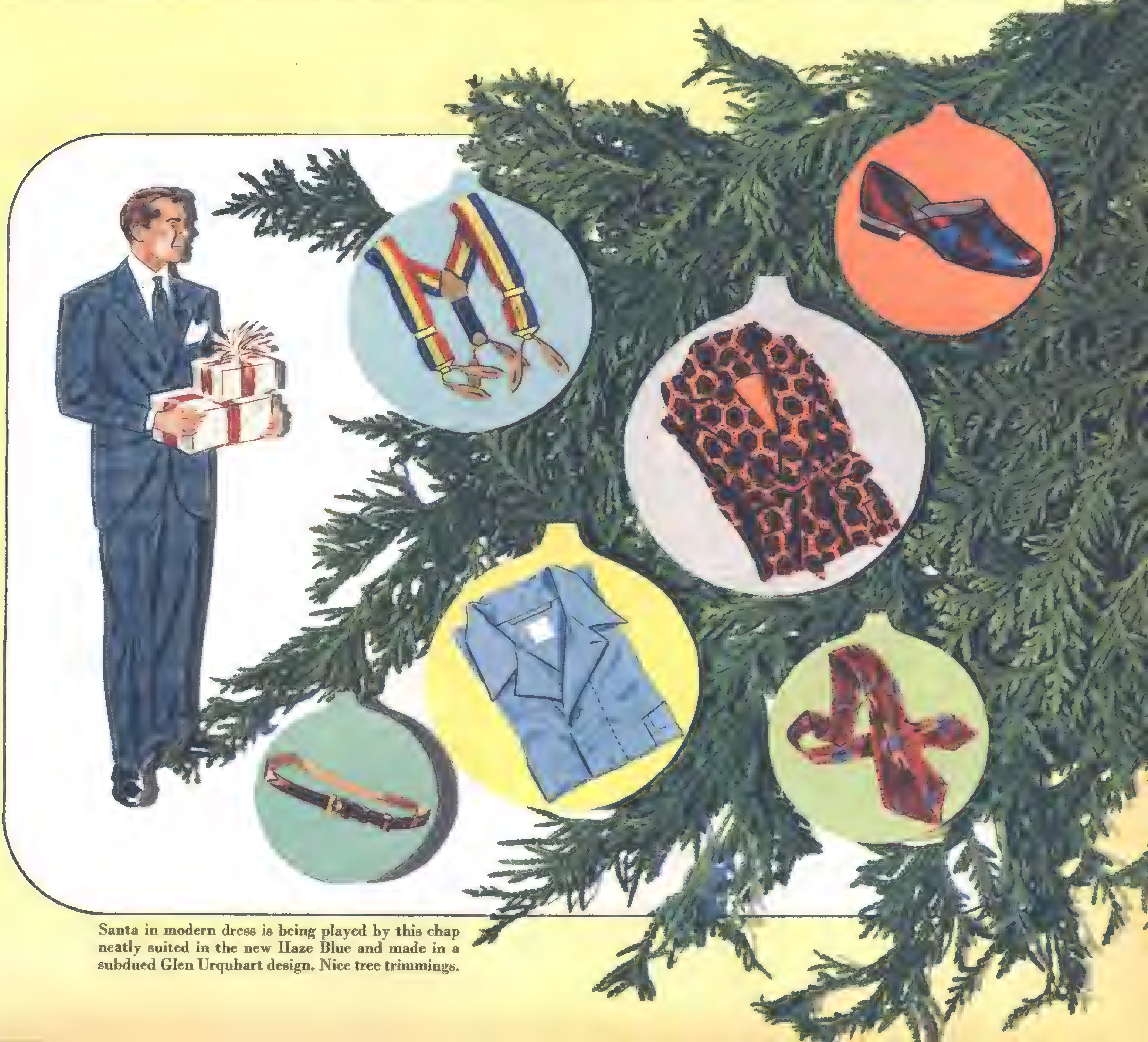
by O. E. SCHOEFFLER

They say that the best of resolutions are vowed only to be broken, hence the clean slate on the first day of the new year. Not being the one either to follow in the footsteps of others or in the furrows of convention, Esquire starts the year off with a firm set of wardrobe resolutions we know will withstand any tempting compromise with good grooming.

As your eyes linger on the myriad collection of gifts to give those lucky enough to be deserving, consider your own needs also and be Santa to yourself. And why not? Then, for those of the fairer sex, an array of niceties certain to bring out the best in any of them.

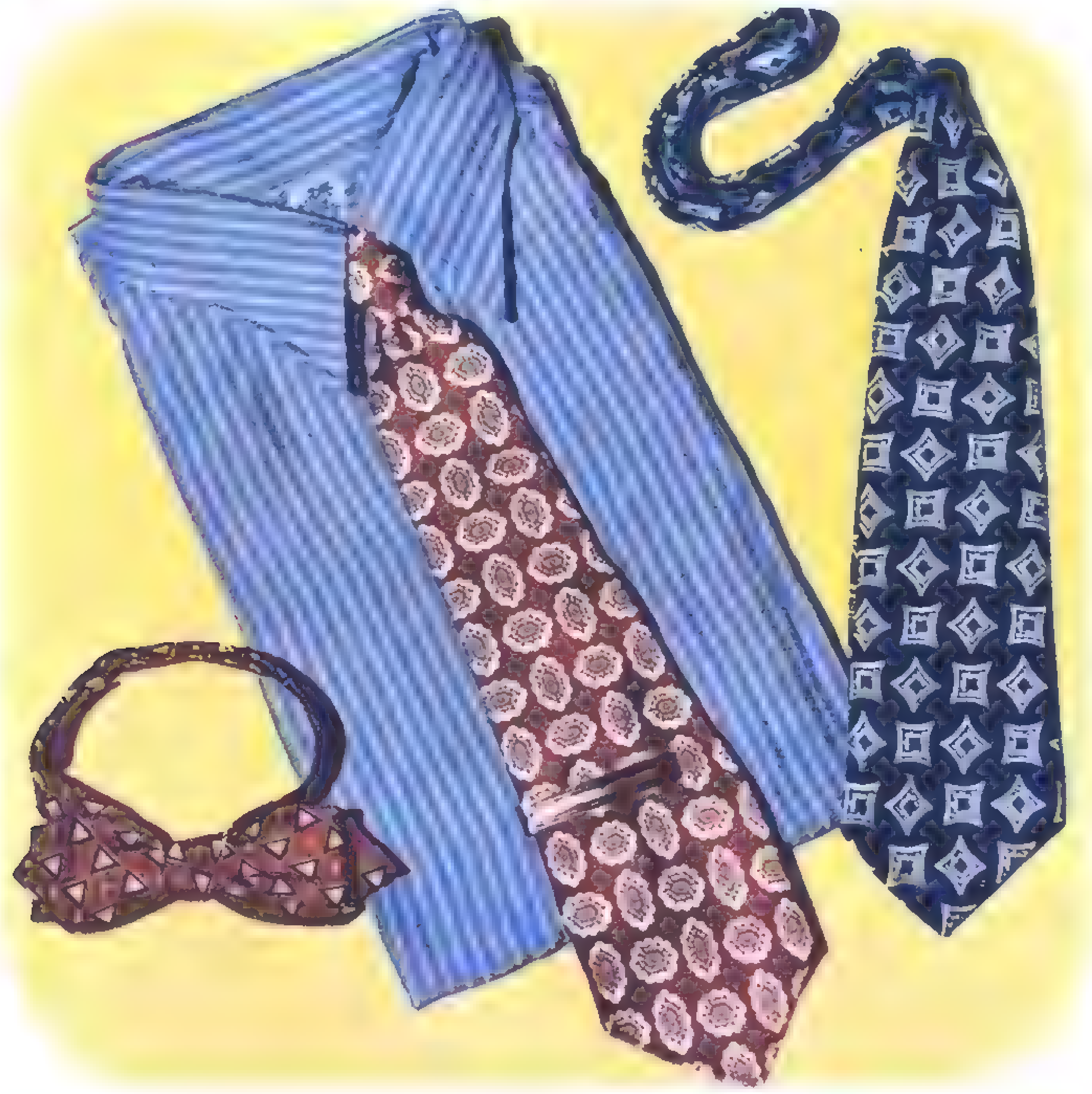
But if your shopping's all done and over, and you're mulling the choice of sun or snow as a background for your holiday, the Peters-Reiser and Murley interpretations of topical wear under either condition will surely help you decide.

Before you go—and even if you don't—there's one other facet of good grooming that needs your timely attention, and we present some new ideas in formal dress. There's quite a bit in what Milroy pictures, so for sheer comfort consider the merits of this proposal. Then too there are those details of evening wear that one's apt to overlook. But Esky hasn't, as you'll see a few pages further on. #



Santa in modern dress is being played by this chap neatly suited in the new Haze Blue and made in a subdued Glen Urquhart design. Nice tree trimmings.

ESQUIRE'S SUGGESTIONS OF HOLIDAY GIFTS



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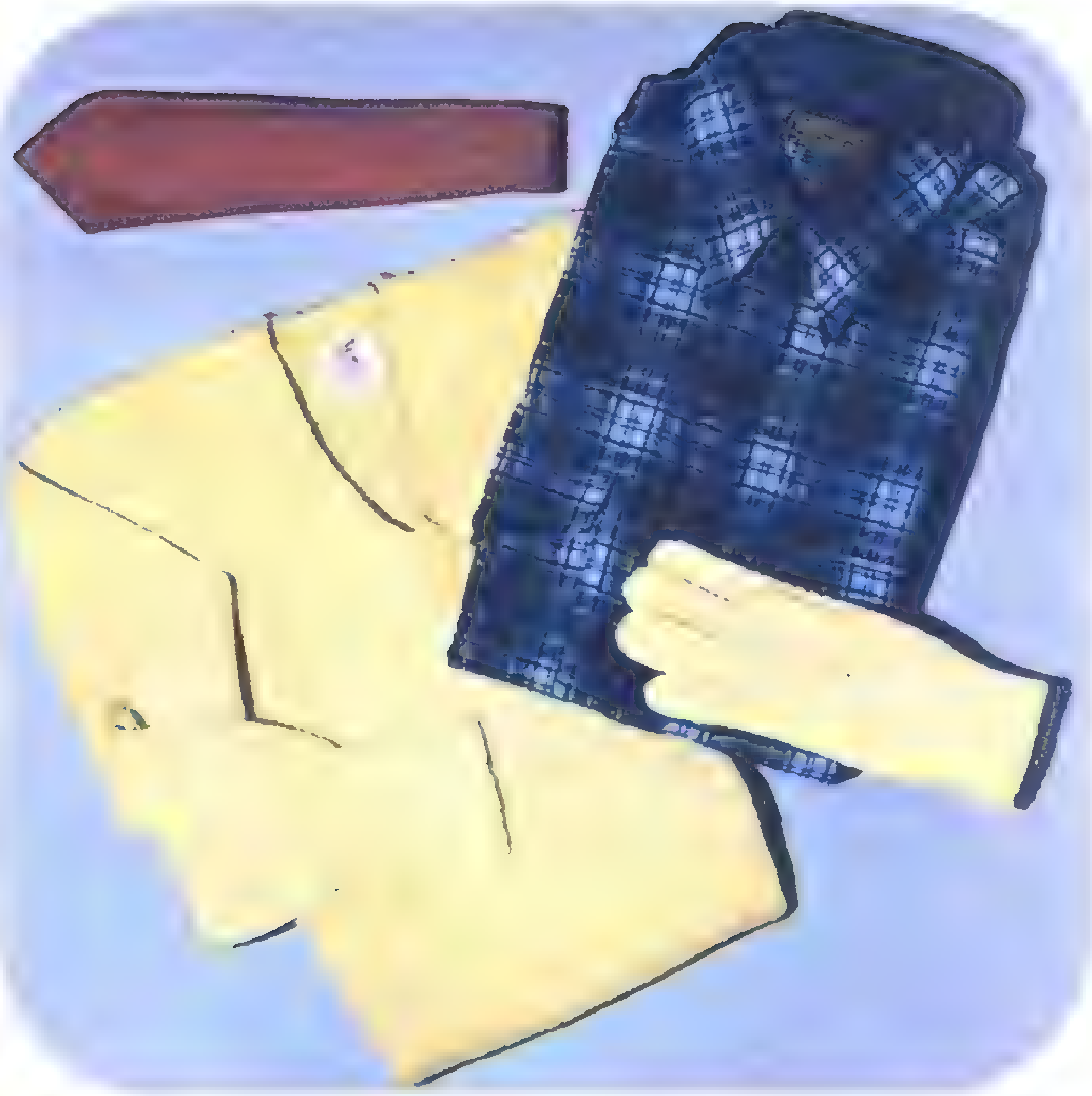
1. Striped broadcloth shirt, foulard four-in-hand and bow ties, tie clip. 2. Soft woolen sweater, tartan wool shirt, plain wool tie, American knit gloves. 3. Argyle plaid wool anklets, strapped moccasin, garter, town shoe, lisle socks. 4. Rayon muffler with fringed ends, Malacca-handle umbrella, capeskin gloves with removable chamois linings, hat in his size, shape and color by gift certificate.



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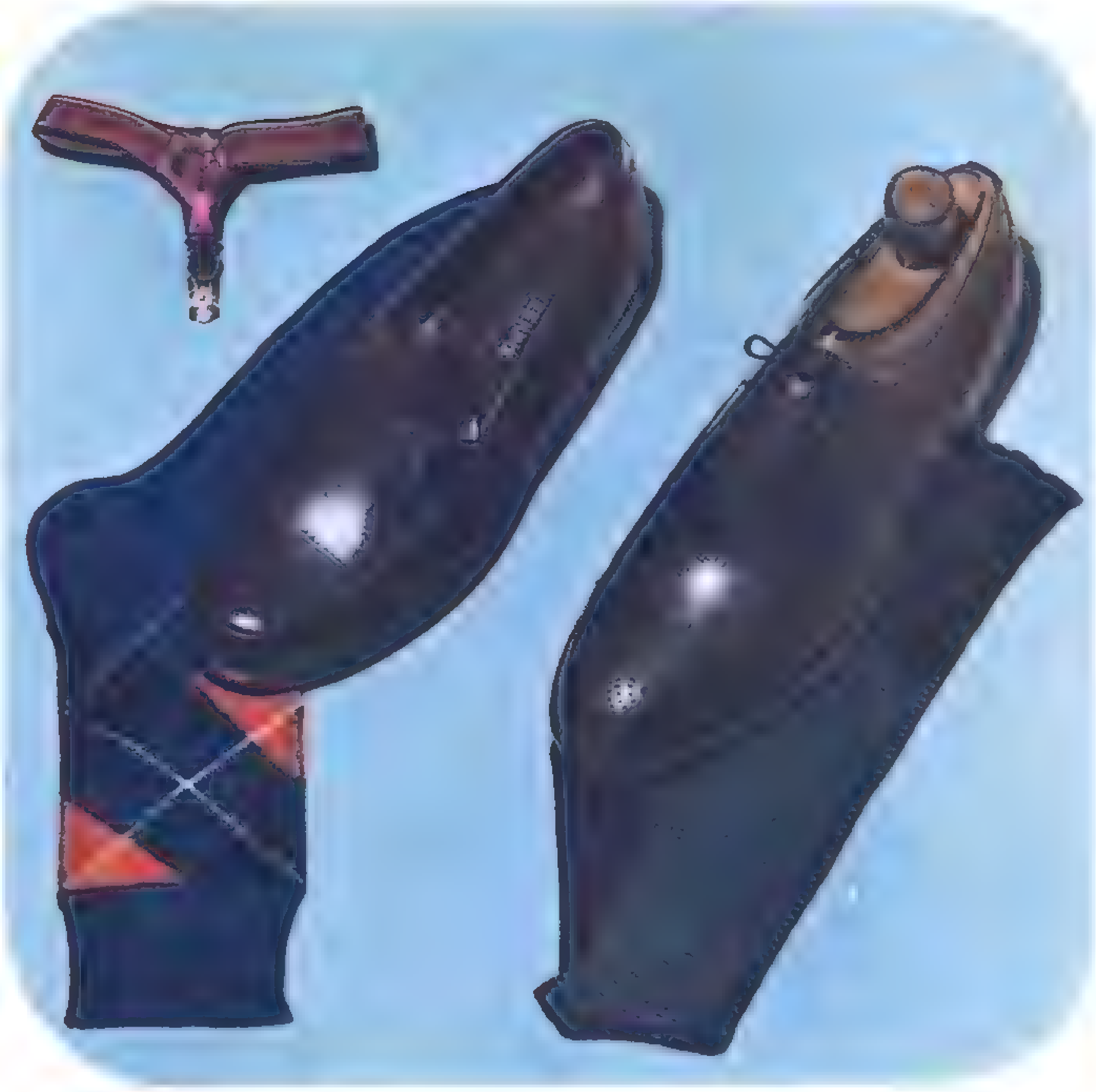

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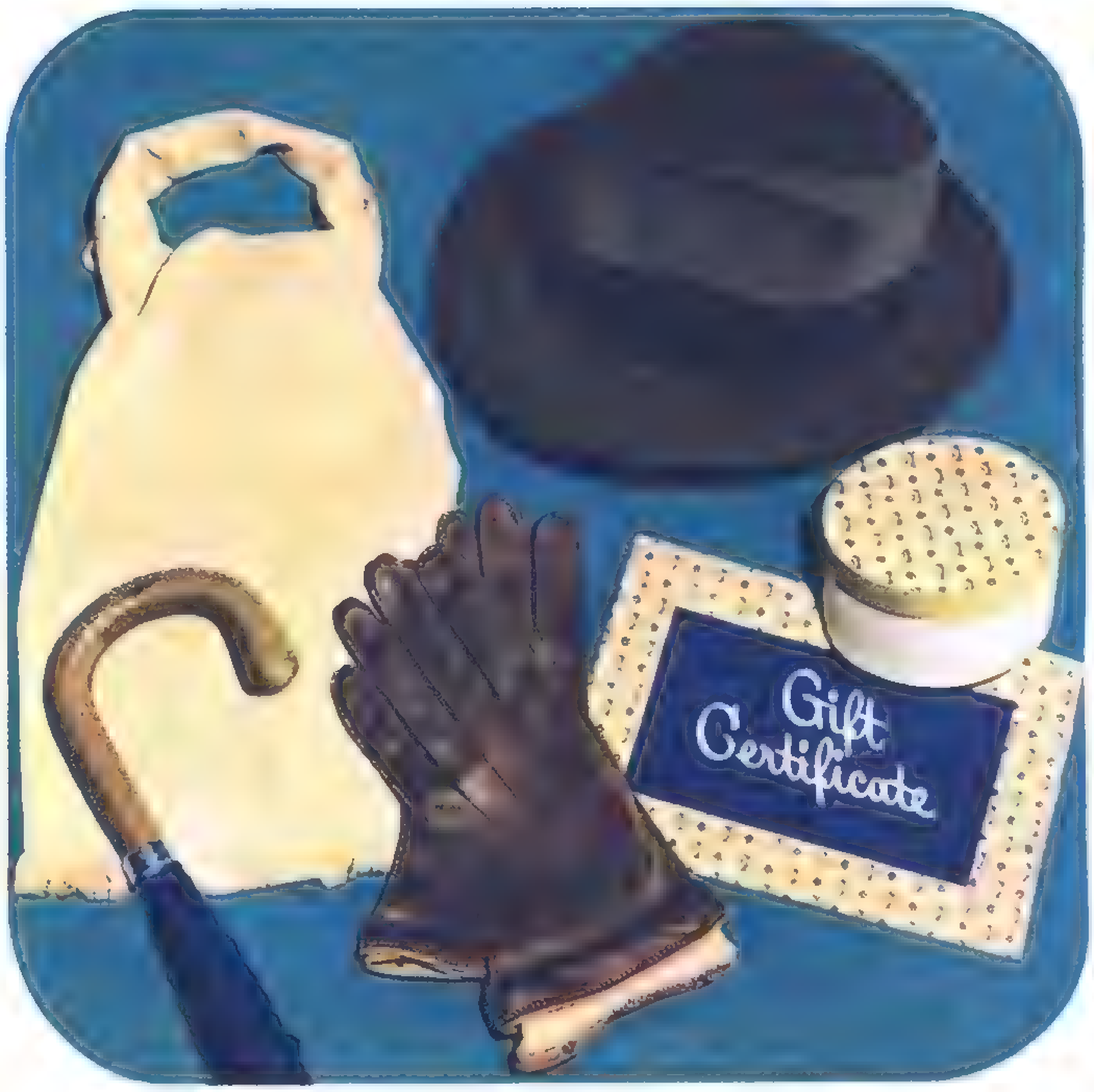


4

En Route or at Home

1

2

3

4

5

1. Three designs of wrist watches, silver cigarette case, cuff links, knife, lighter, tie and money clips. 2. Crocodile billfold, wallet, car-key case, silver chain, sealskin car-key case. 3. Metal and wardrobe cases. 4. Toiletry set, shave soaps, lotion, electric shaver, fitted manicure case. 5. Desk writing case, stationery, scissors-and-letter-opener set, pen-and-pencil sets, electric clock.

For Holiday Sports

1

2

in blue
FINIAN'S RAINBOW
LOGAN
COLUMBIA

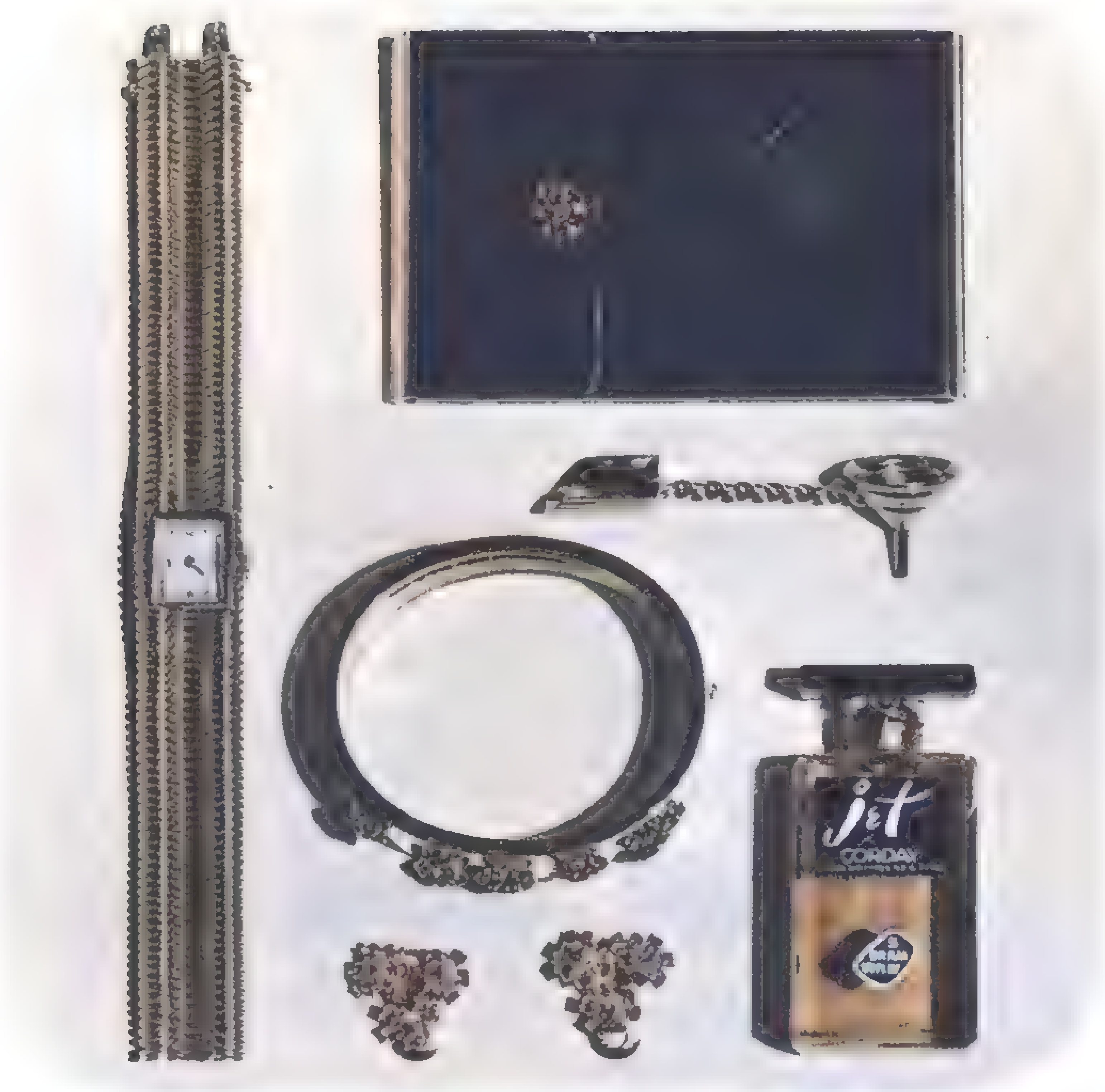
3

4

5

1. Badminton set, plastic-head clubs, matched irons, leather golf bag. 2. Humidor, table lighter, pipes and rack, ash tray, cigarette holder. 3. Precision camera, duck book ends, current books, record albums, 16 mm camera. 4. Poker table, poker set, gin-rummy set, highball glasses, lighter. 5. Cocktail shaker with wooden handle, cocktail shaker in case, ale tray, glasses, swear box, beer mugs.

For Christmas Belles



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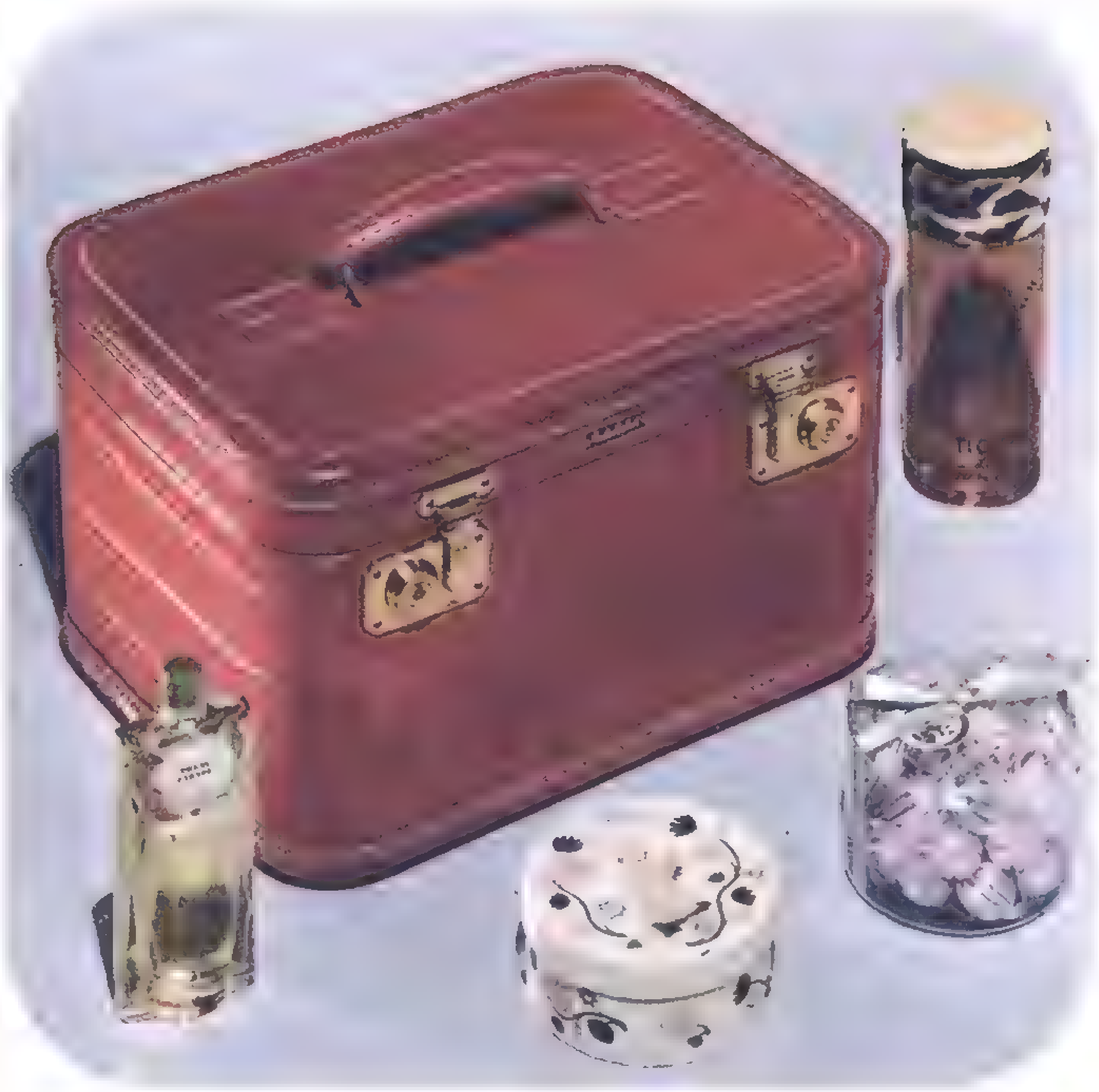

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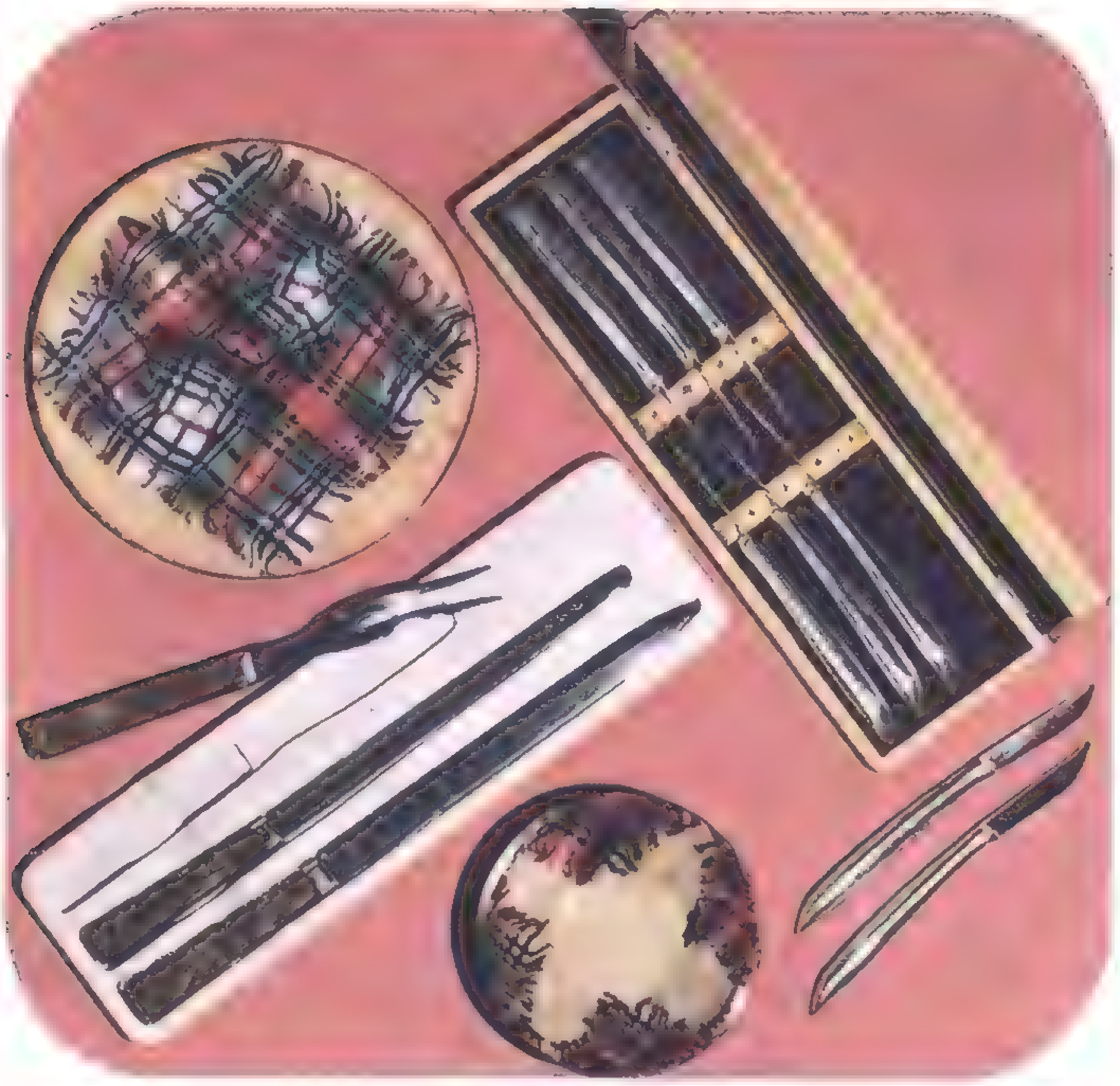

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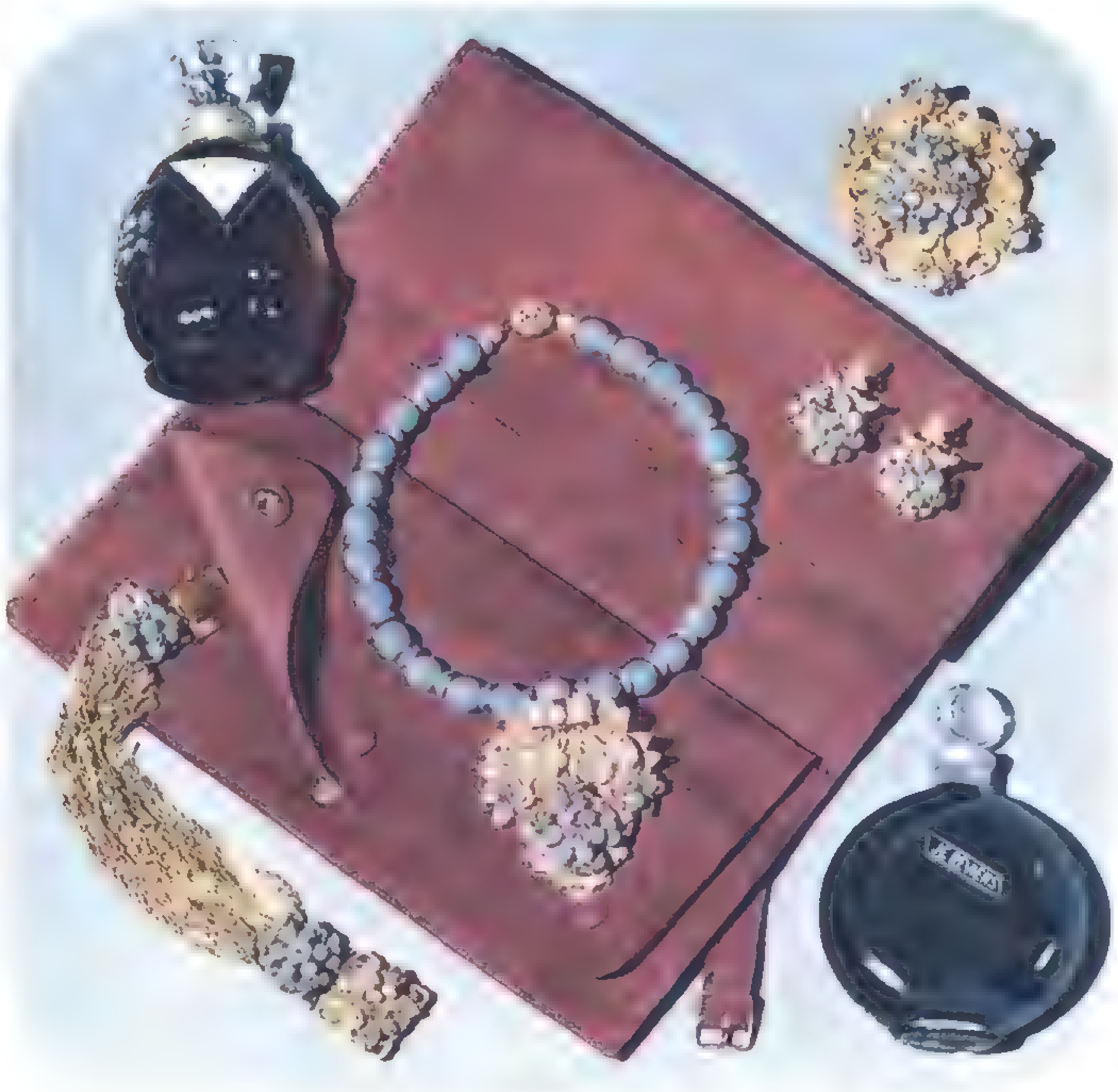

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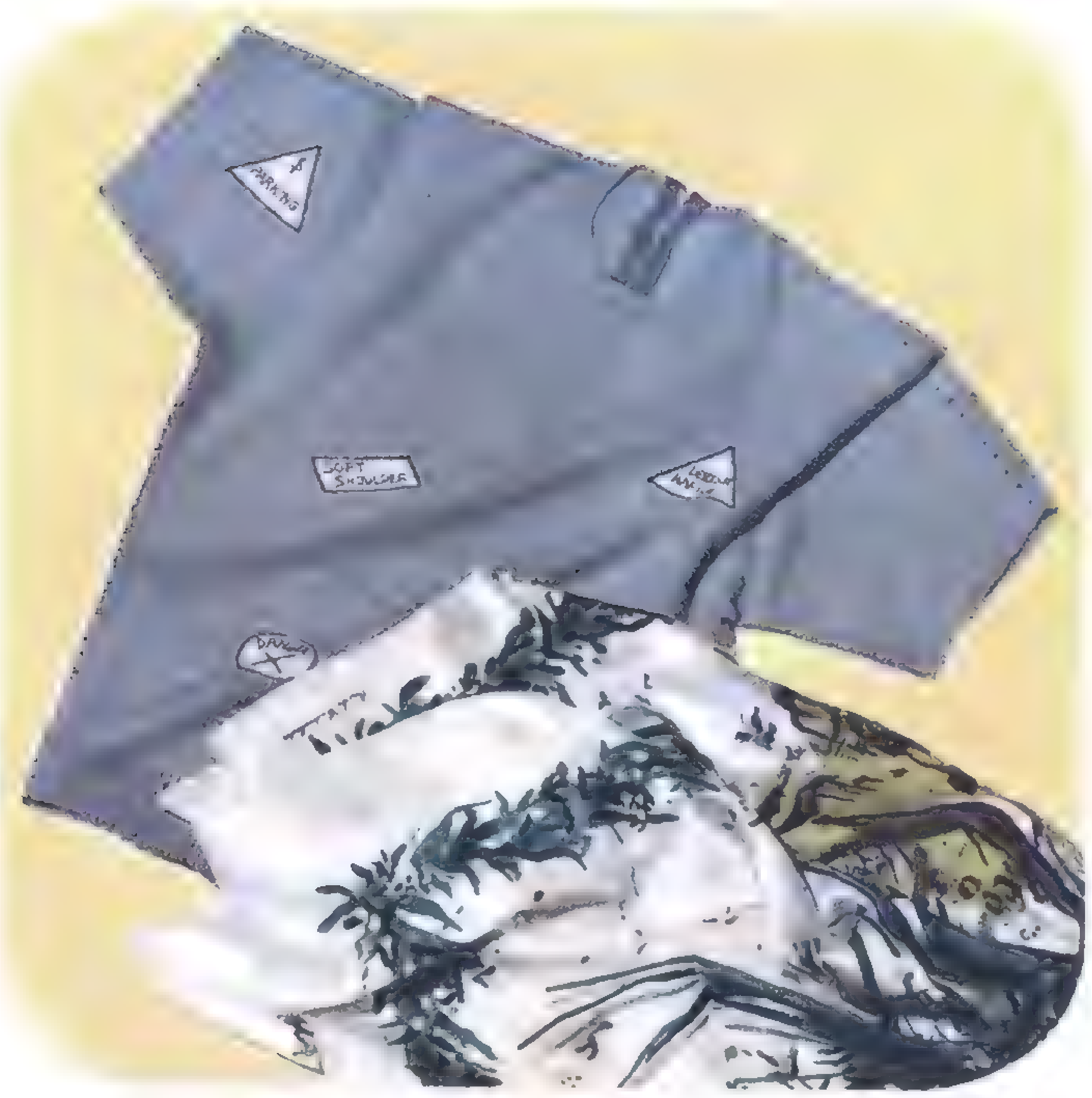
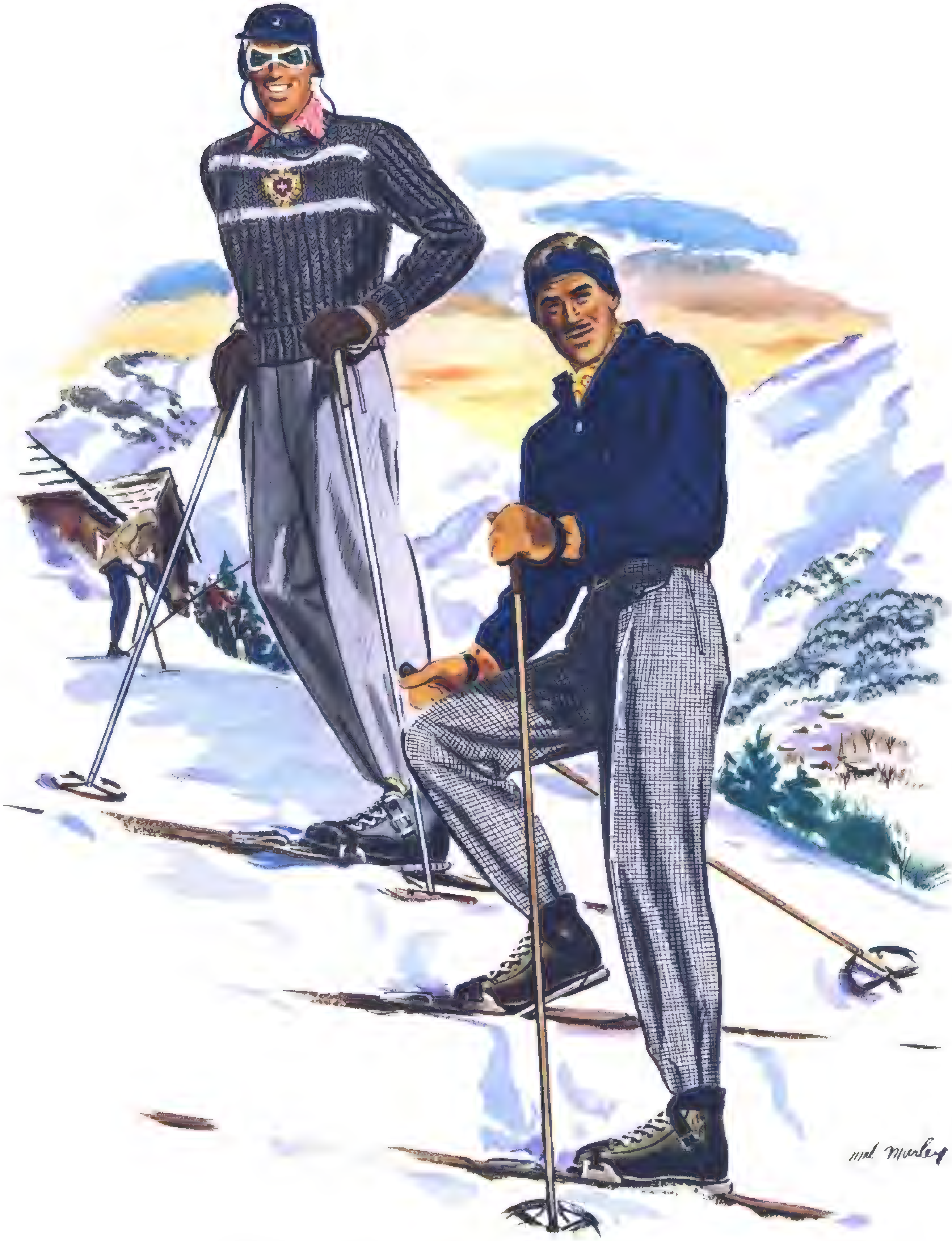


5

1. Gold-snake bracelet watch, gold checkbook case, funnel and powder scoop, bangle bracelet, ear clips, perfume. **2.** Red leather case, colognes, dusting powder, sachet. **3.** Plastic-covered wooden plates, set of novel-shaped steak knives, carving set. **4.** Red suede jewel case, necklace, brooch, earring clips, bracelet, cosmetics. **5.** Novel design pull-over sweater, a large printed square scarf.

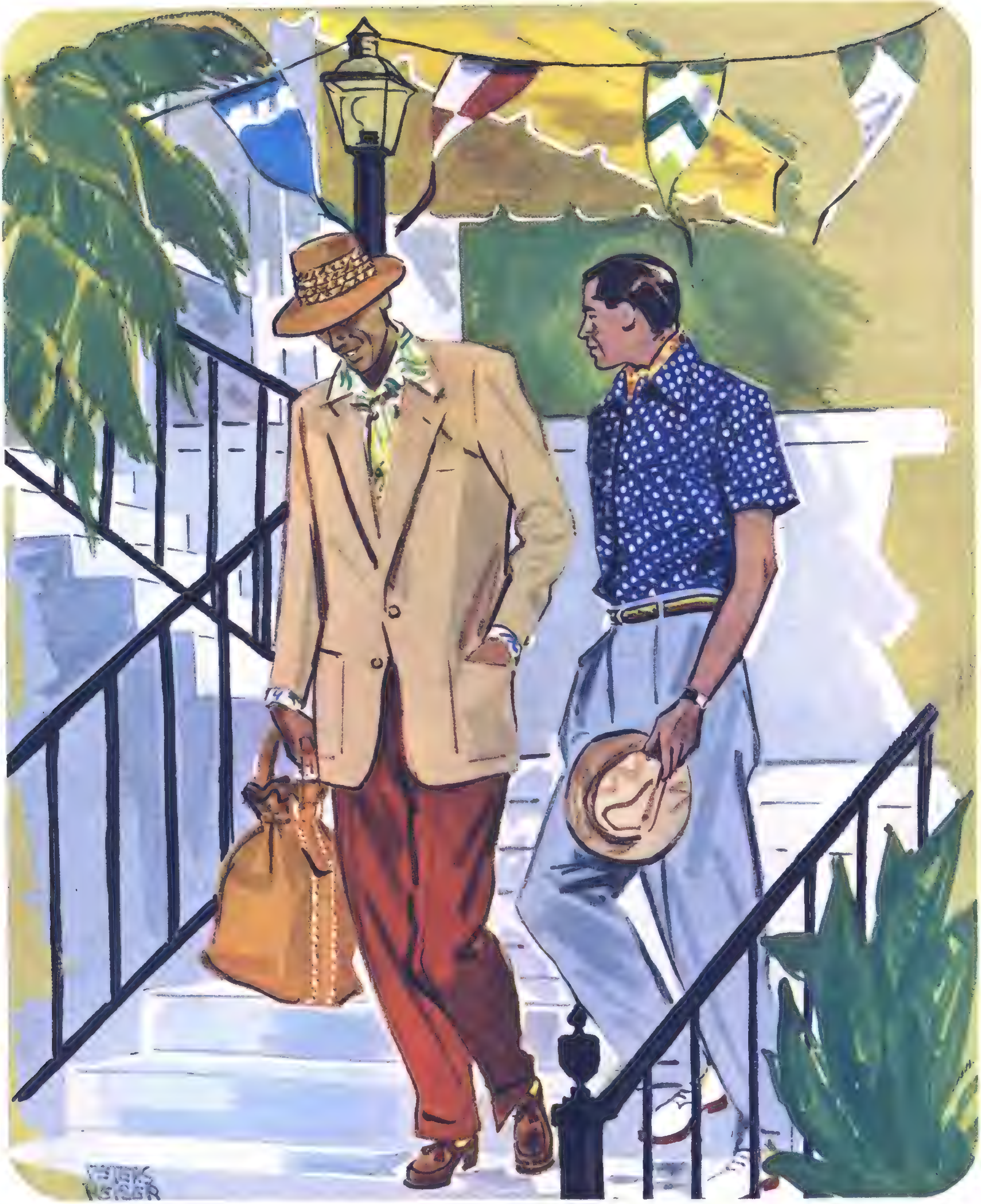
KODACHROMES BY ARNOLD GLANTZ



PERFECT TECHNIQUE

Drawing by Mal Murley

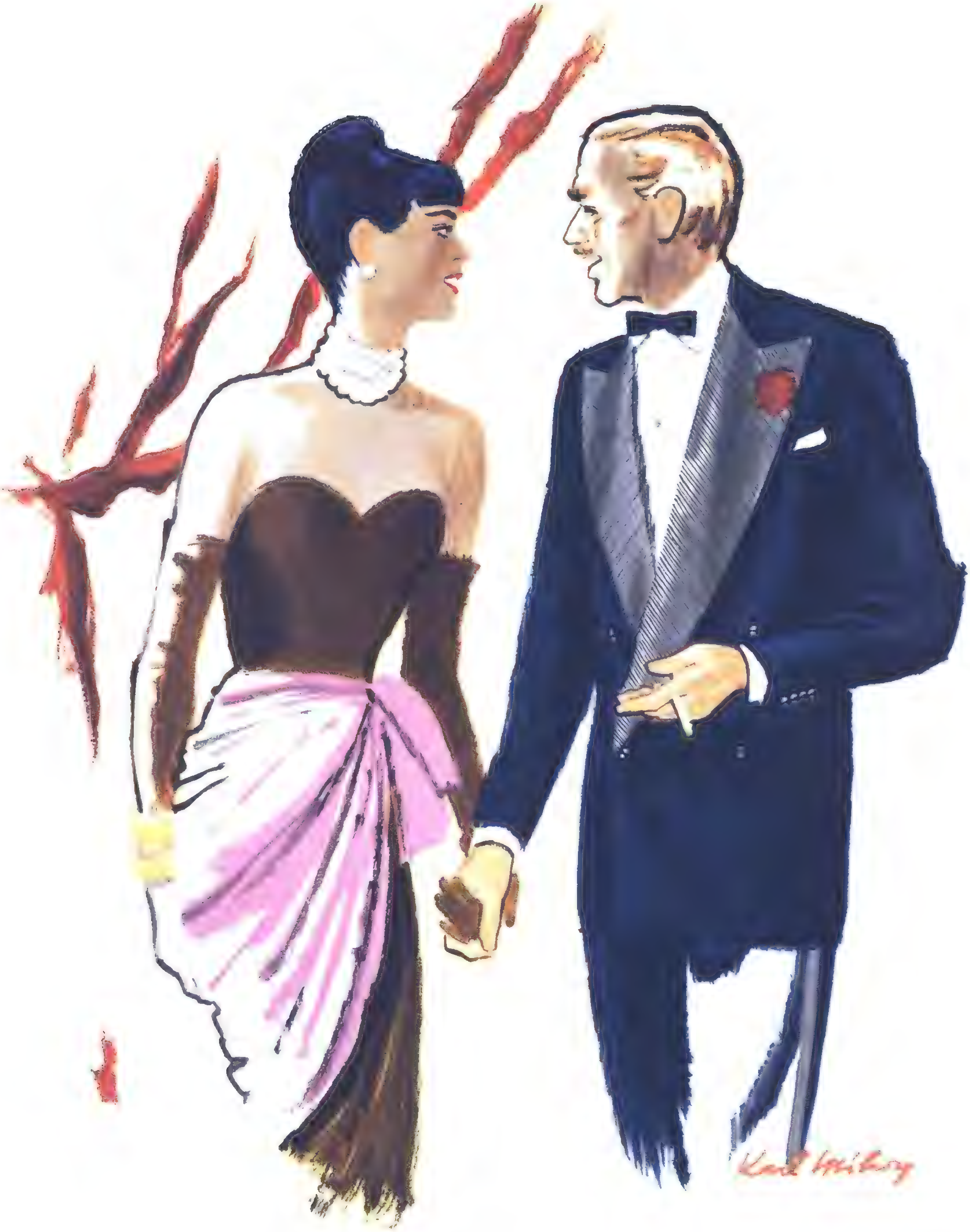
Actually it matters not a great deal which ski technique you employ. Advocates of the Arlberg style are stanch defenders of their beliefs, and if you're cornered by a proponent of the Parallel school the best thing to do is keep nodding in silent agreement. One thing they all agree on is equipment, and if you can try on a pair of those new checked trousers, or that pull-over very simply designed with a stripe or two, you'll find that they make very commendable additions to your skiing wardrobe. The trousers are woven of a worsted-and-nylon mixture for good hard wear and have been processed to repel water. The parka, wool flannel shirt, leather gloves, head band and boots all make sense, and there's no telling the tyro from the expert here.



SOUTHERN CUSTOMS

Drawing by Peters-Reiser

One of the nice things about living where snow and cold make a yearly appearance is the proximity of this tempestuous clime to the sublime sun of the tropics. Overnight, usually, by air liner and not much longer by fast train. So if you've had your fill of sniffles and Old Man Winter, take a cue from these two chaps and get your travel agent busy with bookings. And if you also follow their wardrobe ideas, you'll shape up well wherever you show up. The man in the natural-linen blazer finds those leather-thonged moccasins mighty comfortable and his rust-colored slacks and figured shirt are all in good company. Other fellow wears light grey slacks and the new polka-dot shirt. Both are wearing summer-weight hats, a good idea under that sun.



MAKING NEWS AT MIDNIGHT

Drawing by Karl Milroy

At first glance you'll hardly think this pleasant scene pictures formalwear news of major importance. Other than the fact that good grooming abounds here, all seems quite normal. But if you were to query the dinner-jacketed fellow, he'd tell you he has never been quite so comfortable in his evening wear as he is just at present. The reason? His midnight-blue peaked-lapel jacket, with grosgrain lapel facings, is made of tropical worsted. This is as sensible an innovation in what-to-wear as ever we did see, for here's the obvious answer to those ever-present tropical temperatures you invariably find in the night spots. Naturally, a heavy overcoat is necessary while making the rounds from pub to pub. It's another step in emancipating the male.

GORDON GRANT

Death can come quite casually in the monotony of a calm sea, its watery film as commonplace as a snarled line

Albacore Fisherman

by EDWARD GALLOWAY

THE night of the fifth day passed and dawn came dull and grey through the mist that lay over the water. The man, stripped to the waist, could feel neither heat nor cold on his naked skin.

He stood on the deck close to the wheelhouse, watching the albacore lines while the boat pushed on through the oily sea. From time to time he looked back toward the east where the Island of San Nicolas lay, thirty miles across the water. Fifty miles beyond that was Anacapa Island and another twenty-five miles farther was Santa Barbara on the mainland. But he could see nothing save the thin-edged horizon like a ruled line and the pale grey zone of haze above it. In all directions lay the ocean, heavy as lead in a mold.

He lifted the cover off the hatch on the afterdeck and looked down into the fish hold. He could see the rows of albacore, stacked like cordwood, their streamlined bodies, white-bellied and black-backed, stiff in the melting ice.

He went back by the stern and hauled in the port inboard line to clear away the kelp that had caught on the hooks. Long tendrils of slime-green sea grass clung to the bulbs on the brown ribbons of kelp. He pulled the barbed double hooks out of the tangle of sea grass and kelp, straightened out the feathers and let the line back into the water, being careful that it did not foul the other lines.

A hundred yards abeam an albacore leaped. Close astern he saw another break water. Then one hit on the long dog line that ran to the masthead. The line snapped taut, the shock spring stretched out to full length. He moved quickly across the deck to the stern and pulled on the line with wide-armed strokes, slowly and steadily until the fish was close to the boat. Then with a quick jerk he lifted it up on the deck and hit it a sharp blow between the eyes. The fish stiffened, its mouth opened wide. He twisted the hook out, picked the fish up by the tail and threw it into the ice hold.

For several hours the boat moved along with the school, and the fish came, striking as many as five and six lines at once, until the man's arms ached and the deck was red with blood and thick with slime from the mouths of fish. Then they were gone and the sea was quiet.

Suddenly the dog line straightened. He reached for the line and started to pull, but the hooks had snagged in the big clump of kelp and the line was tight. As he leaned back, the heel of his boot skidded on the slippery deck and his body spun in a half circle. He let go of the line and made a wild leap for the gunnel. He missed and for an instant he seemed to hang suspended in the air. Then suddenly he felt the warm sea water close over his head.

He flung his arms out, trying to catch hold of the dog line, but the weight of the sea boots dragged him down. He sank deeper. He could feel the dull aching pressure of water against his eyes, the wire-thin hum in his ears. He tore the knife from its sheath on his belt, slit the boots down to the soles and kicked them off. Then he swam to the surface. The boat was two hundred yards across the water and moving steadily away. He saw the hull outlined clear and sharp against the grey curtain of sky, the black lettering on the white transom, the empty wheelhouse.

For a moment he half expected the boat to stop or perhaps to circle back. He started swimming, wildly thrashing his arms and kicking his legs. His pants and wool socks dragged in the water. He swam until the humid air burned in his lungs and the blood pounded in his temples. But the boat, gliding smoothly over the water, was getting farther away. After a time he stopped his frantic swimming and with great whistling sobs sucked air into his wide-opened mouth.

The boat was growing smaller now. The black letters on the transom had faded, the bleached outrigger poles were hairlines over the water. All around the sea was quiet and the sun sank lower in the sky. He treaded water and rested, searching the water close about him. But he could see nothing save the wide, empty ocean and the darkening sky above.

He thought of the boat heading out to sea with the night coming on, with the running lights out and the long lines trailing. He wondered vaguely why he should think of the running lights and the lines as though he were still aboard.

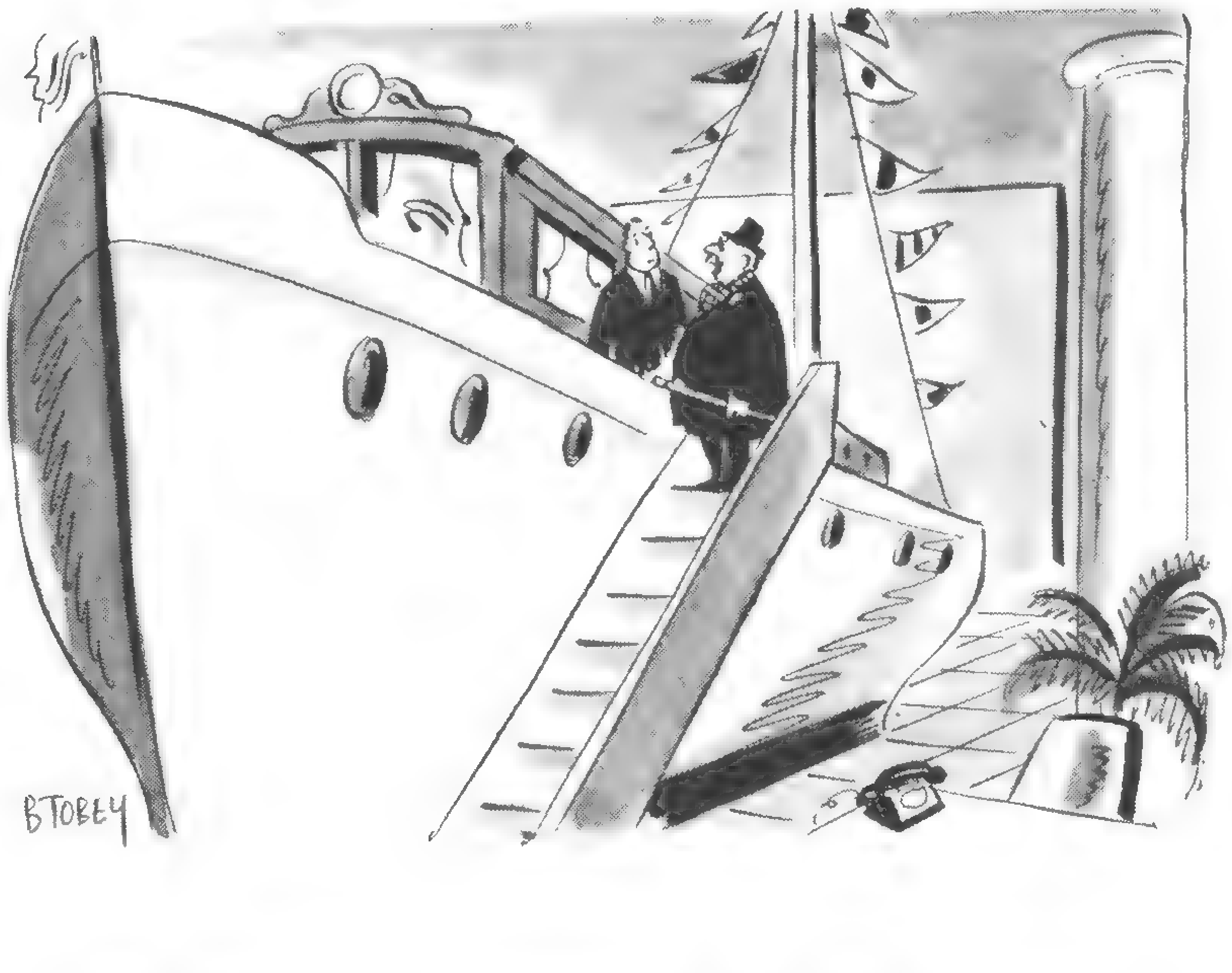
A strange, uncertain feeling came over him that he was not in the water. That he was not himself. For a moment his mind split and a part of it seemed to stand away. He was on the dock in Santa Barbara telling the story, quietly telling all about it. And the story was real. It had come like a dream comes, out of the darkness, without reason, confused shadows holding no limits. Then slowly, like an easy waking, he knew that he was there in the water, his hands weaving gently to keep him afloat.

The water had deepened to steel-blue and out toward the west the orange-red sun buried itself in the sea. One by one he saw the stars break through the blackness overhead.

He reached out under the water in a slow breast stroke. He swam until his arms were tired. Then he lay on his back, moving his hands slowly. The haze had cleared now and he saw the black depths gleaming with the light of stars that swept across the heavens. His eyes closed for a moment and when they opened he saw the sky like one great picture . . . star clouds of the Milky Way, Dippers, squares and crosses, and the infinite black depths of space.

A gentle weariness came over him and his hands moved slower in the half-warmth of the water. He was conscious of the slow, sullen breathing of the sea. The mild night air hung low. He felt it pressing down upon his face.

A watery film veiled the brightness of the stars and the whole dome of heaven seemed drifting onward in the void. The night was growing darker with a deeper kind of darkness that reached far out beyond the stars. The night flowed down through time . . . a dark river of night that never ended. #



"Just a little something to throw a New Year's party with"

This One Was Perfect

George's semiannual journeys to Chicago demonstrated the cheery sentiment that wedlock and padlock need not be the same

by MATT TAYLOR

My old friend George Campbell phoned my apartment late one Saturday afternoon. "I'm taking the 20th Century," he said. "There's time for two drinks if you hurry. So front and center. The Biltmore bar."

Once every spring and fall George took the Century to Chicago, and the rest of the time he commuted on the five-thirty-five to Pelham. His company's plant was in Chicago and they dragged George there twice a year with the regularity of a Capistrano swallow to pep him up so he could return to New York and pep up the salesmen.

He was waiting for me at the bar, all shined and polished, and I got a brisk executive handshake. "I'm one up on you," he said, after he'd ordered my Martini. "Maybe if I get tight I'll sleep. I seldom do on trains." He shrugged. "But I'll have Sunday to catch up anyway. That's why I always leave a day early. I'm nice and fresh for the Monday morning pushing around at the plant. Drink up."

"I'll nurse this," I said. "I'll be drinking later."

He raised his eyebrows. "A large evening coming up?"

"Large enough," I told him. "The Stork Club. There's a party of six of us. Yes," I added, "it'll be quite a large evening."

"Joe," he said, going solemn on me, "don't you ever get tired of this bachelor running around?"

I gave it back to him, neat. "George," I said, "don't you ever get tired of what you drew?"

"Ursula is a top card in any deck," he said stiffly.

"Ursula is wonderful except for one thing," I replied. "She's a wife. How's she feeling otherwise?"

"Bereft at the thought of my leaving. It breaks the perfect family circle, she says. But I always remind her she has the twins with her while I'm away."

"Does she have to be reminded she has those brats?" I asked him.

"The twins are relatively well-behaved," he said. "Anyway, *we* like them. They're part of my ideal setup."

"And The Stork is part of mine," I said. "Maybe I *will* have another drink. You depress me so."

I left him two drinks later. I watched him hurrying along behind his porter toward the train gate, and then I did a little hurrying myself. It was to be a black-tie evening, and I had to dress.

We had fun—three bachelors and their lovelies for the evening at a ringside table, and at about nine-thirty we began to think of food. I was studying the menu card when a waiter tapped me on the shoulder and said I was wanted on the phone.

It didn't make sense. I hadn't told anyone where I'd be except George, and George was somewhere west of Utica on the Century.

It was a woman on the phone and her voice was shaky with excitement. She gave me an address only two blocks away, and an apartment number. I had to get there right away, she said. I was needed desperately. She mentioned George's name and hung up. This didn't make sense either, but I sent word back to the table that I'd been called away for a few minutes, and I sprinted down the street.

The apartment had class and so did the redheaded damsel in the green evening gown who opened the door. Of course, her lipstick was bitten off and her mascara runny, but the stress of emotion didn't affect her build. She grabbed my arm and said, "In here—quick!"

She manhandled me through a living room into a yellow and ivory bedroom. George was stretched out on the low wide bed, with his coat off and his shirt open, and he was as yellow as the room. "Joe," he said, in a weak, quivery voice, "I'm in a jam."

"Not yet," I said. "I won't tell."

"But you've *got* to tell Ursula," he moaned.

"Tell her what?" I asked gruffly.

He looked at me balefully. "I have to have an emergency operation," he said. "The doctor from downstairs has sent for an ambulance. It's a hot appendix."

I looked from George to the redhead. "Yeah," I said. "Hot."

He stared at me fixedly. "Joe, will you explain things to Ursula? Will you try to make her understand?"

I took another look at Red. "Er—understand what, George?" I said.

"Tell her—Oh, damn it! Come clean with her! Tell her I've been pretending for eight years to leave for Chicago a day earlier than I really do. I do it so I can come here—"

"Wait a minute!" said Red. "Eight years ago I was in rompers."

"Here, or someplace like this," he corrected. "I always make a big evening of it with someone like Bobsy here. We have a few drinks at her place, then go out for dinner, hit the night clubs and have fun. Then I go to my hotel and take the Century the next evening. That's all. Make her believe that's all it is, Joe!"

I opened my mouth and closed it. "Yeah, but—"

"Oh, damn, Joe! For three hundred and sixty-three days of the year I'm married. And I love it! But for two days—well, just pretending I'm a bachelor again, it's sort of a change . . . " He grimaced as the pain hit him. "Get Ursula in from Pelham," he said. "Make her grab a cab. I want to see her before they put me to sleep. And Joe," he pleaded, "try to make her believe in me, will you?"

"Maybe she will, George," I said. "Maybe she just will. You take it easy."

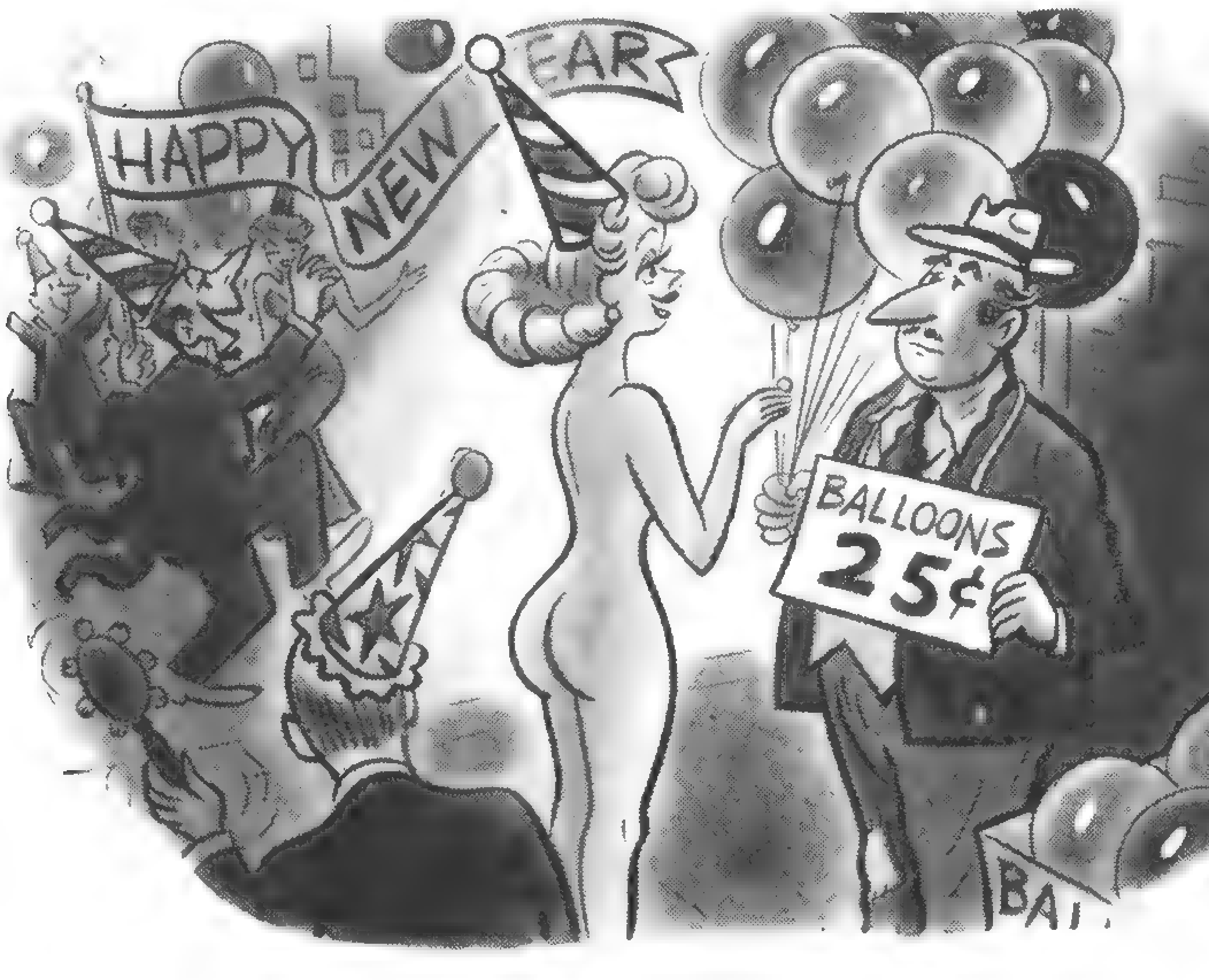
I drove Ursula back to Pelham three hours later. She was still crying as we started. "He'll be all right, won't he?" she asked.

"The damn thing's out, and Doc said no complications," I told her. "You'll see him tomorrow."

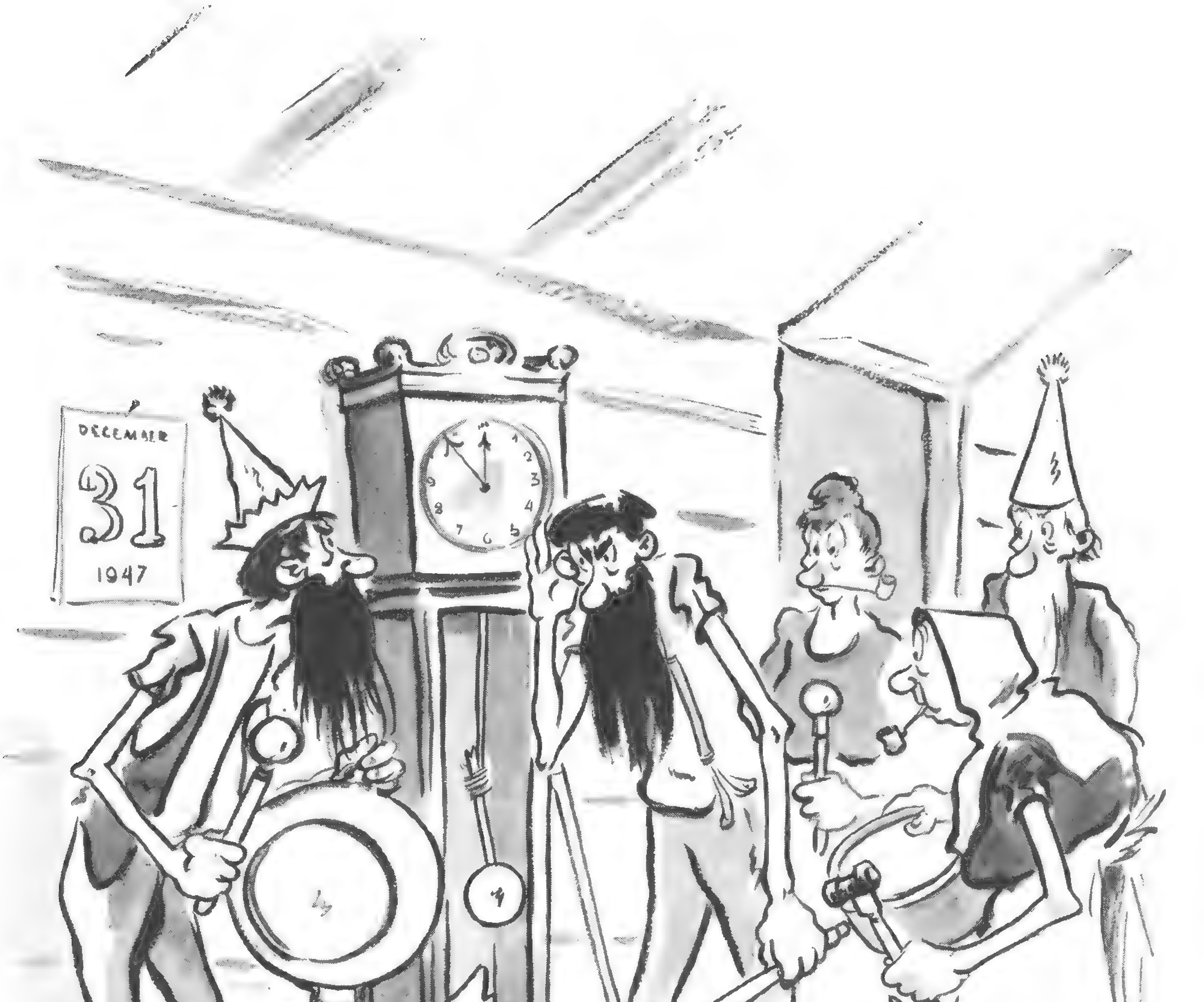
"He's so *right* for me, Joe," she said tenderly. "It's the perfect marriage! Imagine us feeling exactly the same about things all this time!" She looked up at me and smiled. "But wasn't it a shame—spoiling our wonderful party at The Stork?"

I patted her hand. "You wait, honey," I said. "We'll make up for it on his next trip."

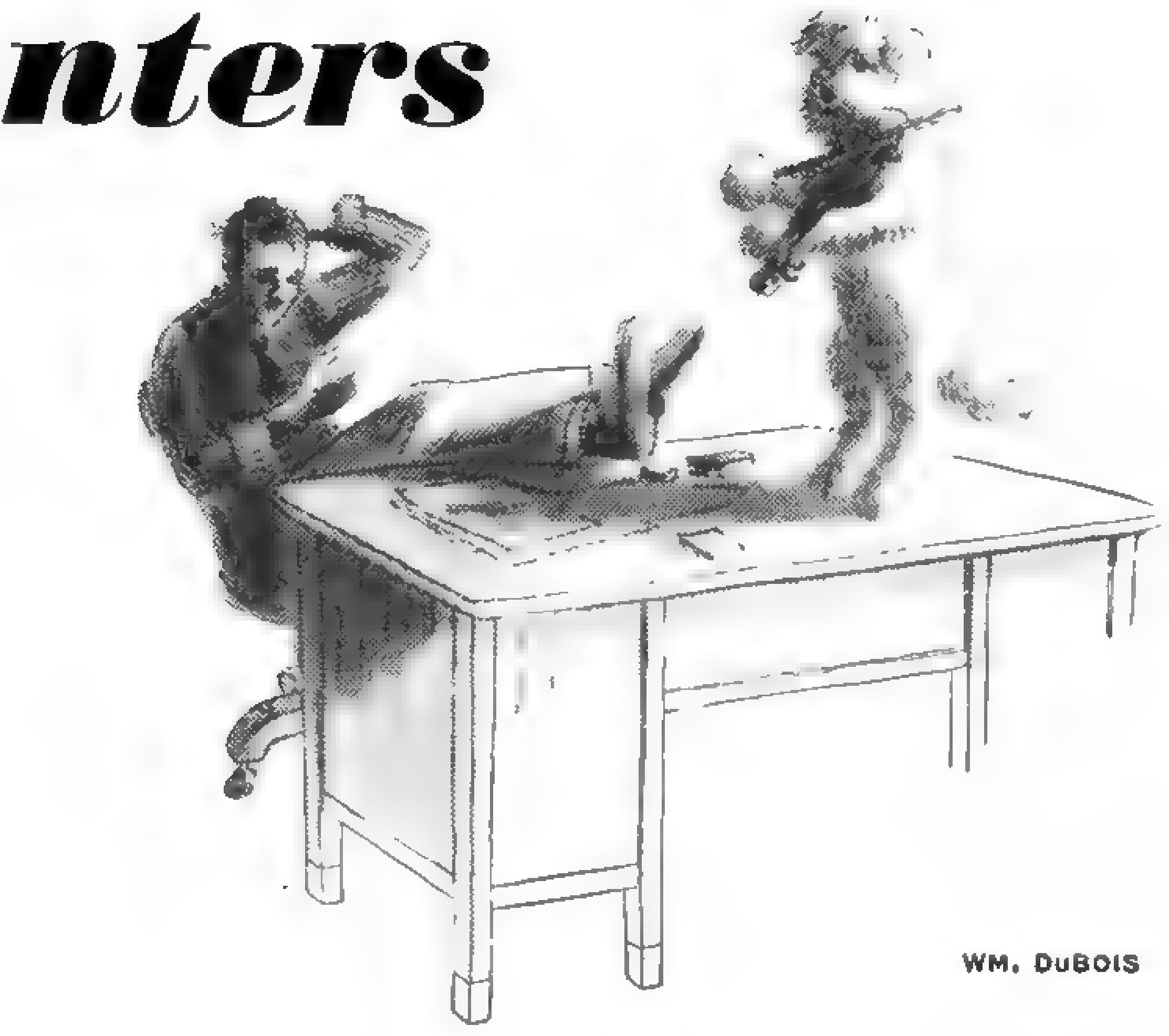
"I hope so, Joe," she sighed. "It's been so much fun!" ⧺



"I'll take a blue one"


DECEMBER
31
1947

Hollywood's Ivory Hunters



Movie sleuths post o'er land and airways without rest, find talent among chorines, choir bassos, saxophone players and seals

by HARMON & ELSIE TUPPER

ONCE a Hollywood producer decided that a drama he was filming required some comic relief in the form of a boxing kangaroo. He telephoned to New York, where a leather-pushing marsupial, name of Sally, was found semiretired after years in vaudeville. The producer's eastern man who located the beast took a liking to her genial ways and gave her a screen test that was a labor of love. Three days were spent on rehearsals alone, for Sally was a little rusty on footwork, ducking and fast jabs to the chin. When she was in peak form and had curbed her tendency to jump on her trainer and drum him to pulp, the make-up man brushed her coat to a high shine, polished her tail, and laced up her milk-white boxing gloves. Sally entered the sound stage, the camera rolled, and for a quarter of an hour she went through her stuff, concluding the act with a wallop that rocked her trainer back on his heels. The producer's man dispatched the screen test to Hollywood, confident that the kangaroo would get a contract. But the producer sent a laconic wire: "Can't use Sally. No personality."

This incident is shrugged off as routine by the talent scouts. To locate a gifted kangaroo, a Yiddish-speaking parrot, or dogs that play basketball is just another chore to these sleuths who seek new performers for the studios. Daily, including Sundays and holidays, they scour the country for talent ranging from wombats to opera divas, not to mention child wonders, burlesque grinders, beauty-contest dollies, comics, and vocalists in church choirs or gin mills. Drawing the wages of cinema serfs—a paltry $25,000 to $35,000 a year each—they are the indispensable eyes of the industry and start the obscure on the road to fame and five grand a week. They relish incognito, mistrust their confreres, and love their jobs, though any moment their heads may roll in the dust.

In the old presound days, an alleged talent scout excited suspicion from the parents, brothers and boy friends of every lovely. "Girlie, I'll put you in pictures" was a signal for shotguns for all parties interested in the preservation of female virtue. Today, talent scouting has been purged of slickers. "Even if we had the inclination, we don't have time to horse around," says Arthur Willi, who is the chief of the eastern talent department for RKO Radio Pictures.

From the thousands of performers and prospects they judge annually, movie scouts make a split-second choice of the tiny few who are good movie bets. The men covering the eastern circuit are on the go sometimes for eighteen hours a day.

"It's enough to drive you bats," says Willi. "A floor show at dinner, then the first, second and third acts of as many plays afterward, with a midnight radio show and some turns in a night club to finish up in the small hours. At seven you catch a radio team that looks good for the movies, then back to the office for interviews. You scram out to a dance audition or television show, with stopovers at the agencies and fashion-model places. You grab lunch on the fly and see a matinee or trek out to the suburbs to gander a vaudeville comic or burlesque stripper. It's murder, but I love it—stage-struck, I guess."

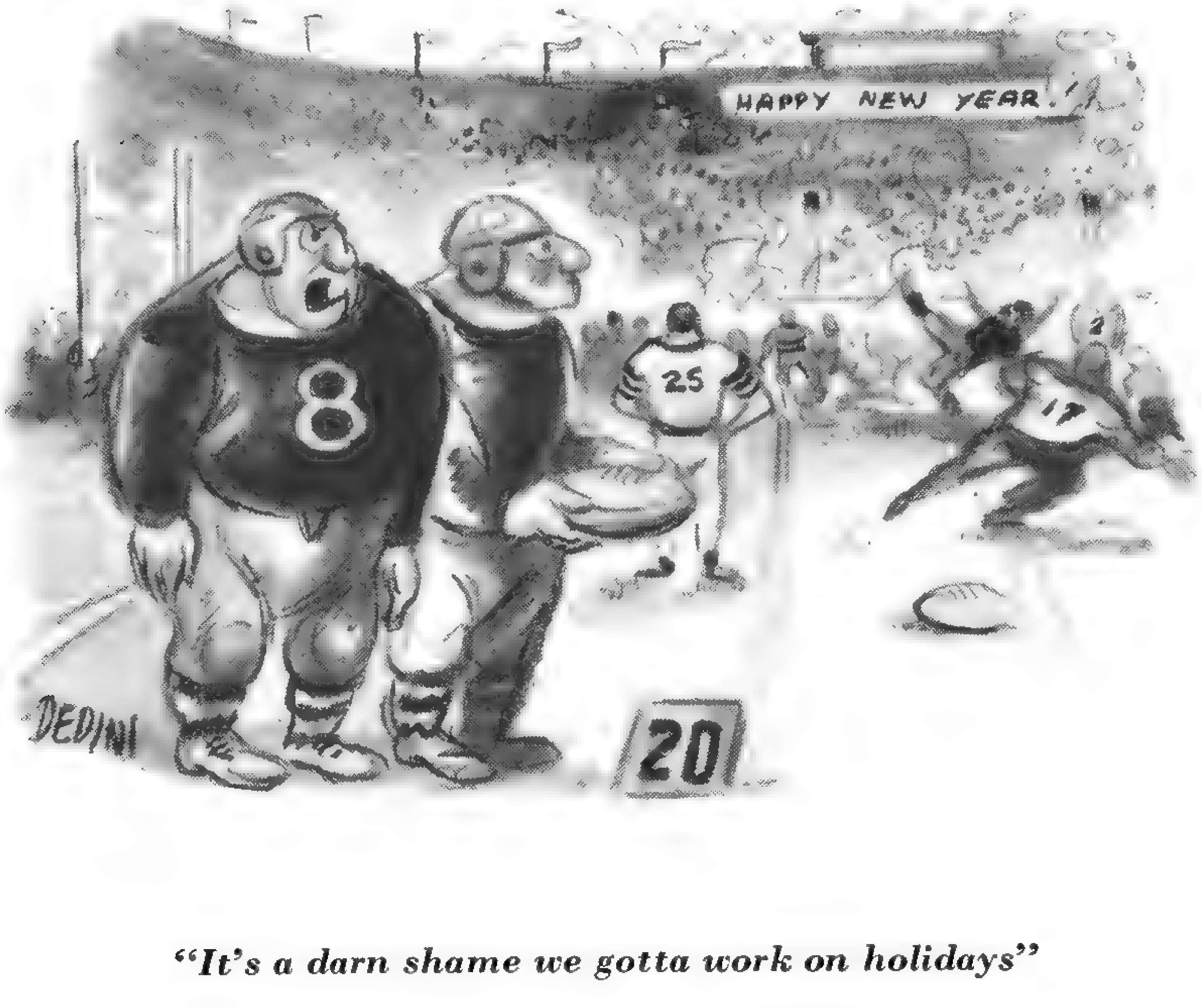
The fifty talent scouts in the industry are about equally divided between the East and West coasts. The eastern outfit—Willi of RKO, Marvin Schenck, Al Altman and Sidney Phillips of M-G-M, Boris Kaplan of Paramount, Joe Pincus and Joe Holton of 20th Century-Fox, to mention a few—shun the limelight like G-men. They know their firms tremble in their corporate boots for fear they will pass up someone in 1948 who will be a rival's box-office smash in 1949. Naturally they are the No. One whipping boys if their bosses must raise the ante to lure a prospective star away from the initial bidder. Therefore, the smart scouts work strictly on the lone-wolf principle.

Talent Sherlocks are happiest when their rivals are missing trains, colliding with heavy trucks or otherwise absenting themselves from a zone of operations. If they are scouting, for example, the New England summer theatres, their custom is to deploy into a town at different intervals and, by curtain time, secure a seat as near as possible to the stage door. With feigned casualness they survey the house to see which competitors are present and where they are sitting in relation to the backstage entrance. At intermission they exchange a few frigidities, their programs carefully folded to conceal their penciled appraisals of the cast. When the final curtain rings down on a promising performer, the scouts fly backstage, where the best sprinter wins first say unless some reptile of a confrere has been skulking in the wings all evening and is already launched into his sales talk.

It is a rule of the game that the talent is not obligated to accept the first offer, though many do so out of excitement, but may wait until all the bids are in before signing the option that binds them for thirty days to a particular company and a formal screen test. Some prospects already know which outfit they prefer, based on the studio's production policies, stable of producers and directors, and guarantee of living quarters.

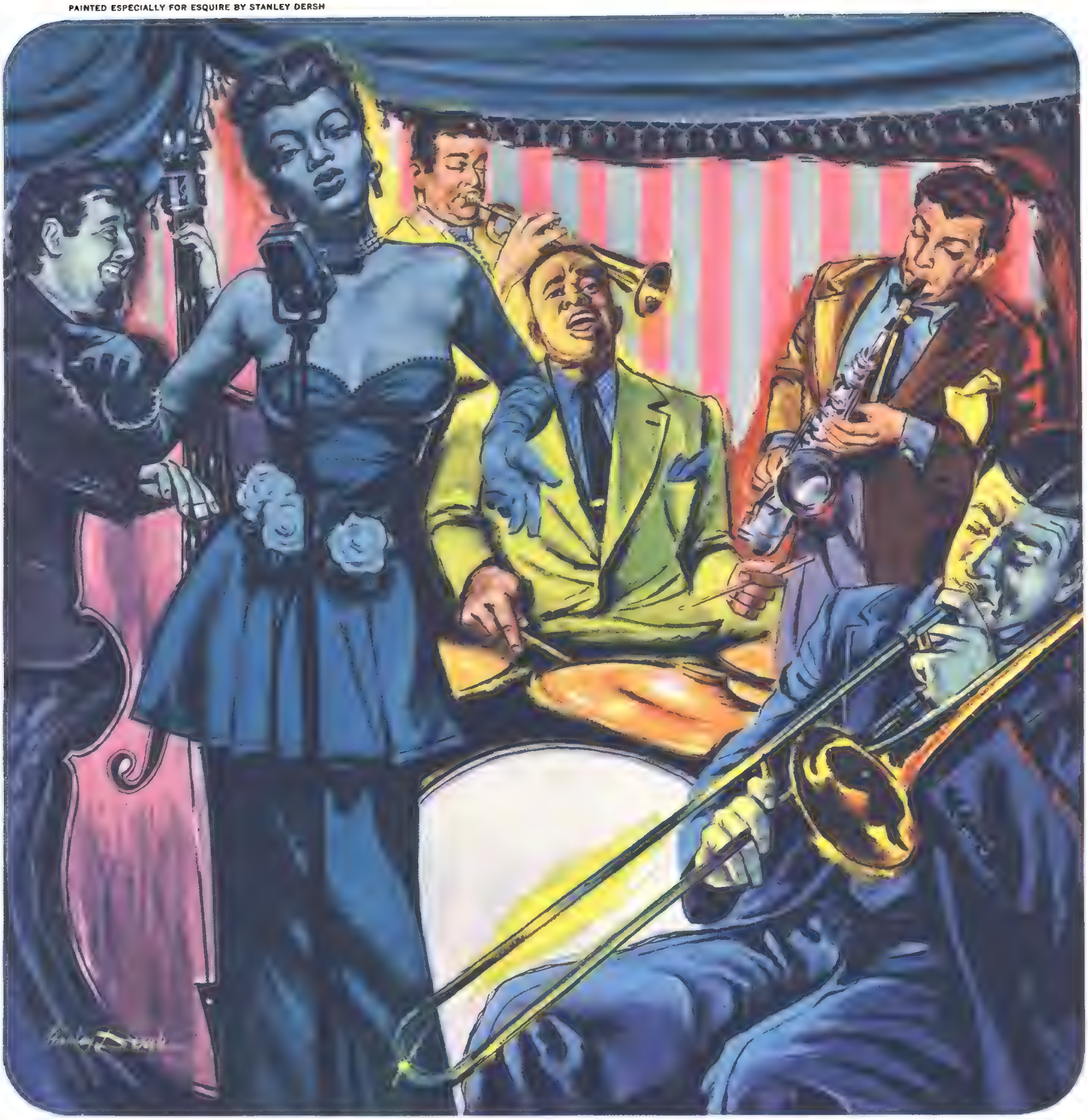
The average scout sees about five thousand performers and prospects in action every year. Only some fifty of these are hot enough to get a New York screen test, which runs ten minutes in projection time, costs from $1000 to $2500 and involves from one to three weeks of grooming and rehearsal. Most scouts coach their temporary protégés in posture, movement, lines and delivery, and show them how to exploit their best qualities. Shabbily dressed kids are given new wardrobes. A make-up man may try many different hair-dos and cosmetic combinations. The finished screen test is flown to Hollywood, where a thumbs-up brings a six- to twelve-month contract, plus travel expenses to the Coast; a thumbs-down releases the hopeful from studio option, a heart-wringing event for the company as well as the disappointed aspirant, for the total ex-

(Continued on page 178)



"It's a darn shame we gotta work on holidays"

PAINTED ESPECIALLY FOR ESQUIRE BY STANLEY DERSH



Cast: Chubby Jackson at bass violin, Sarah Vaughn, Max Kaminsky at trumpet, Sid Catlett at drums, Georgie Auld at sax, Jack Teagarden at trombone

Blues on 52nd Street

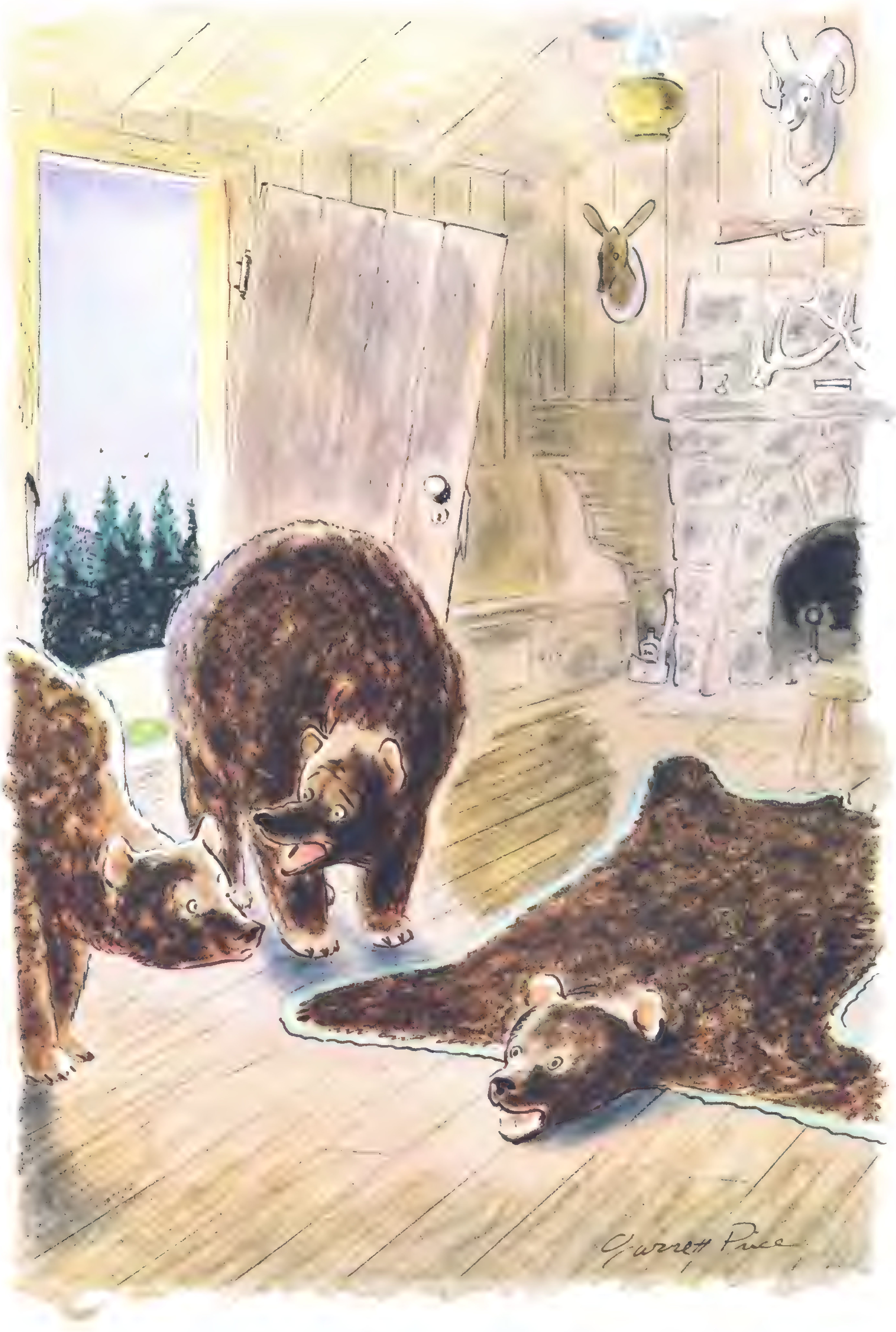
by GILBERT McKEAN

It is, maybe, a small, smoke-ridden room, ill-lit and garishly decorated. The cats who come in to nurse a beer are three and four deep in the standing room at the bar and about the only other space not covered with a table belongs to the telephone company.

Now the musicians saunter back with the studied casualness of their profession. The drummer pats a drumhead questioningly and tightens it a whit; the bassist looks out at the audience and mugs lightly at a friend; the trumpet man blows inaudibly through his horn as he idly fingers the valves, while the trombonist works the slide nervously as if he wants to reassure himself repeatedly of its facility. With a poise beyond her years and a charming shyness, the singer walks on, nodding and smiling to the negligible applause. There are few big *entrances* on The Street. The audience waits until something good has happened and then quits sitting on its hands.

Something good usually does happen these days; but it happens in fewer places, for this two-block segment of jazz history is past its war years peak. Back around thirty-five, thirty-six, Reilly and Farley were at the Onyx Club belaboring a defenseless fluegelhorn and causing a mildly amusing form of Dixieland to "go down and around." The Famous Door had Red McKenzie's crew which included a chap called Bunny Berigan, who was playing what may be conservatively termed one of the greatest horns of all time. The leader, Mr. McKenzie, played lead comb and tissue paper and helped out on vocals. The Hickory House boasted Red Norvo and a combo sparked by the arranging of Eddie Sauter and a guitarist named Dave Barbour. After 1936 practically every jazzman in America played in The Street at one time or another.

Some say that Fifty-second Street is an artery of jazz that has begun to harden, but The Street has been written off and reinstated a dozen times in a short career fraught with intermittent influxes of leg shows and quasi-vaudeville. And it's better than an even bet that these interlopers will always give way to the returning musicians. It will be one of the few places where you can always depend on hearing fine modern music performed by the masters. Along with the famous addresses in New Orleans, Kansas City, Chicago and Harlem, the hazy little bistros on Fifty-second have an important place in the history of jazz. ⌗


Garrett Price

"Is it anyone we know?"

Dr. A. O. Gettler's researches into death by fire and water have solved a conundrum which plagued investigators for centuries

Accident, Suicide or Murder?

by EDWARD D. RADIN

PASSING tugboat crews gaped and then shouted at the man standing at the foot of 29th Street and the East River. If he heard them, Dr. Alexander O. Gettler showed no sign. Calmly and methodically he continued at his task. He was drowning dogs with the reluctant determination of a scientist sacrificing animal life to save human beings. For the chief toxicologist of New York City was seeking the answer to a problem that had been puzzling law-enforcement officials well over two hundred years.

One out of every twelve deaths in the United States is violent and has to be investigated. Each year skeletons pop out of closets in 120,000 American homes as police probe into the background of those who died with their boots on, seeking an answer to the ever-recurring question:

Was it accident, suicide or murder?

For centuries drownings and burnings have been the favorite red herrings used by murderers. Each time a floater is pulled out of the river or a burned body is uncovered in smoldering ruins, police ask the same questions:

Was the man alive when he entered the water? Was the woman cold and stiff when the fire started? There just wasn't a sure way of knowing—that is, until Dr. Gettler came along with ideas which he proved by his investigations. When Dr. Gettler (a chemist, incidentally, not an M. D.) opened his investigations into drowning, he started out with the accepted fact that a drowning person automatically holds his breath for as long a time as is possible in order to avoid swallowing water. As the drowning continues, the necessity for air forces the victim into violent gasps, thus drawing water into the lungs.

The chemist sensed the significance of this fact. The lungs are connected with the left side of the heart. What happened to the water in the left lung? Did it seep into the left heart? If it did, Dr. Gettler knew that he had a perfect test for drowning. When blood in the left half of the heart was diluted by water, then the victim had died by drowning. If not, he was dead before submersion, thus ruling out the possibility of suicide and bringing murder to the forefront.

The dogs proved this theory. Dr. Gettler went one step further and added a refinement. He discovered that when drowning occurs in fresh water, the normal salt content of the blood in the left heart should be lower, but if it occurs in salt water, the salt content should be higher.

Dr. Gettler's prognostications have been verified over and over again. Today, in many quarters of the globe, his is the standard test to determine whether a person has drowned.

The chemist next turned his attention to fire victims. In attacking this problem he again used blood as a point of origin. Since fire causes smoke, he knew that carbon monoxide should be present in the body if the victim had been alive before the fire. He analyzed the blood of those who died under normal conditions and found less than one per cent of carbon monoxide, while the percentage in the blood of known fire victims ran as high as forty per cent and seldom lower than twenty per cent.

But the scientist did not know if carbon monoxide entered the bloodstream after death. The body of a nameless Bowery derelict destined for a pine-box burial in potter's field was placed in the unaccustomed luxury of an airtight zinc-lined coffin. At the time he was placed in the coffin, his blood showed normal carbon-monoxide content.

For three days carbon monoxide was pumped into the airtight case through a specially constructed vent. Then the coffin was opened and another analysis was made. No change was found in the blood of the corpse. Through this experiment Dr. Gettler had devised a test for fire cases which was soon to come into widespread use.

A Brooklyn lodger was one of the first to learn about the new test. A rooming house was gutted and after the blaze had been extinguished, firemen found the body of the landlady on the inside stairs. In addition, her two small grandchildren were found dead in their cribs on the second floor. An examination showed that the woman had a fractured skull which could have been caused by falling timber.

Dr. Gettler checked for carbon monoxide and reported that all three had been dead before the fire. Startled police began an immediate inquiry and several days later one of the roomers confessed that he had robbed the landlady and murdered her. He looked up and saw the two grandchildren watching him from over the banister, and he knew he would have to kill these two witnesses to the crime. Then he set the house on fire in order to cover up the triple slaying.

Much of the guesswork has been taken from the question of accident, suicide or murder. Attempts to mislead the police department by burning or tossing victims into the water is on the way out. Better tell your friends. #

GLANTZ

Night Club: Menace with Music

The Bogart of folk singers is an ex-merchant mariner named Paul Villard whose menacing delivery of his own sea songs sent chills up and down some of Manhattan's choicest spines at Le Ruban Bleu last season. Mr. Villard quit school because he found geography from books dull and ran away to sea where he learned to sing out on deck on the long nights between ports. Between convoys during the war he drifted into Greenwich Village's famous talent mine, the Vanguard, and was duly discovered by owner Max Gordon. Now he may soon be available to the ladies from coast to coast in celluloid at their favorite neighborhood theatres.

Maybe you can name the capitals of all the nations in the world, but can you spot the native countries of these ten card games?

According to Hoyle

by JOHN WINTERS FLEMING

REISMAN

Although most card games, like children, belong to families—thus Bridge belongs to the ancient and aristocratic Whist family—some few have come to be known as national games rather than as belonging to any particular card family. These card games have been played for scores of years, by the masses of a nation, while the classes flitted from game to game. Here are ten such games. Can you return these errant nationals to their homelands? You will note that America, England and France each have two national games.

Six out of ten isn't a bad score. Eight makes you card sharp. If you get all ten correct, you must be Edmund Hoyle himself.

Nation

1. America
2. America
3. England
4. England
5. France
6. France
7. Germany
8. Ireland
9. Mexico
10. Russia

National Card Game

A. Cribbage
B. Spoil Five
C. Skat
D. Euchre
E. Cassino
F. Napoleon
G. Vint
H. Piquet
I. Écarté
J. Conquian

CLARK

Lady on the Prompter's Stool

Script-girl Polly Craus has spent the more recent months of her twenty-three years prompting Hollywood stars of the likes of John Garfield, Gary Cooper and Greer Garson. At the same time she's furthered an athletic hobby by being named California Senior Fencing champ. Neighbor Cecil B. De Mille spotted her in an amateur show, advised concentration on motion pictures. Starting as a messenger, she switched to script girl and got her big cuing break with The Postman Always Rings Twice. *Polly's wants include a place on the 1948 Olympic fencing team, a job as test director, and a man rugged enough to boss and keep up with her, too.*

Answers

1. *America* E. *Cassino*
Cassino is an ancient card game, originally meant to be spelled *Casino*, but spelled with two s's due to a printer's error. The misspelling has continued throughout the years, at least in books about card games.
Along with Euchre, Cassino is invariably welcomed as a respectable family game. In fact it is often considered a child's game. But many gamblers believe it to be the best of all games for two persons and it is frequently played for important money. It can be played by three and four persons as well.

2. *America* D. *Euchre*
The Louisiana French brought Euchre to America. Its origin is uncertain, but at least one eminent authority believes it started with an attempt to play Spoil Five with a Piquet deck (a thirty-two card deck with ace high and all cards below the sevens left out). Any number from two to seven can play.

3. *England* A. *Cribbage*
Cribbage is one of the oldest and oddest of all card games. In manner of playing and method of scoring it is unique. It is also one of the very few good card games that makes little demand on the memory. Best played by two persons, it can be played by three or four.

4. *England* F. *Napoleon*
Napoleon, also known as Nap, is one of the easiest and most popular of card games, a game in which luck is almost everything. As with Écarté, Napoleon frequently got into bad hands and has come to be synonymous with the word gambling. Any number can play it, but four make the best game.

5. *France* I. *Écarté*
Écarté is a card game of comparatively modern origin, for it was played in Paris salons in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Many authorities consider this game to be the French cousin of the American game of Euchre. A two-person game.

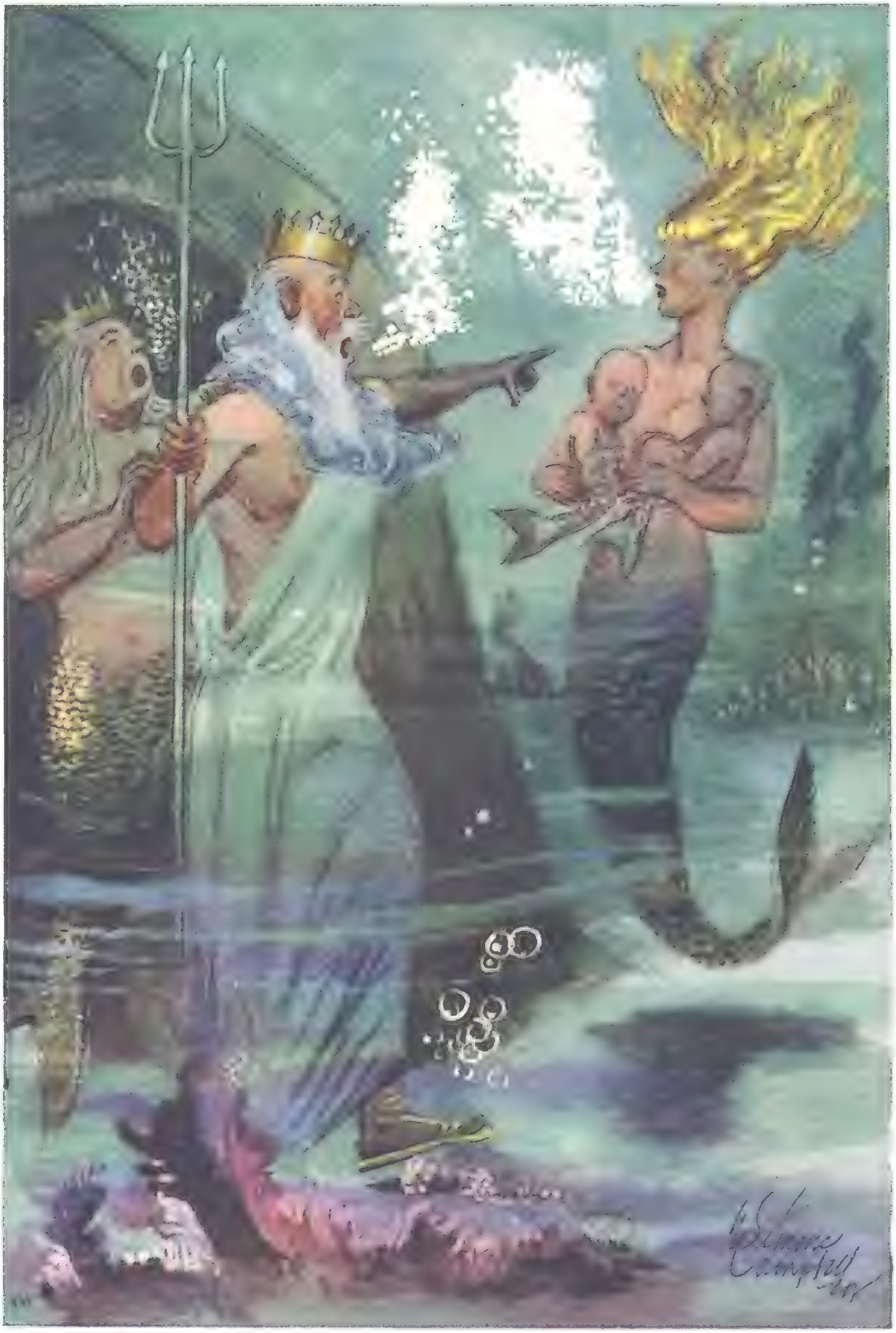
6. *France* H. *Piquet*
Piquet is a perennially popular game supposedly introduced in the fifteenth century during the reign of Charles VII and designed as the theme for a ballet of living playing cards at the palace of Chinon. Another game that's best for two players, although three or four may participate.

7. *Germany* C. *Skat*
Skat is believed to have originated among the farmers of Thuringia, a province of Saxony, Germany. Many card players today consider it to be a better game than the more blue-blooded Whist. Skat is a game for three players.

8. *Ireland* B. *Spoil Five*
Directly descended from Maw (the most preferred pastime of James I in the seventeenth century), Spoil Five is one of the oldest of all card games and as wide open (any number from two to ten can play) as the proverbial Irish heart in whose cockles this game has long been enshrined. Five or six players usually participate.

9. *Mexico* J. *Conquian*
Also called ¿Con Quien? (from the Spanish, meaning "with whom?"), this is the sire of the modern game of rum or rummy. It is very popular in those states bordering Mexico, especially Texas. It is a game for two players.

10. *Russia* G. *Vint*
Similar to Bridge (trump is established by bidding) and similar to Whist in method of play, this game has been described both as Bridge without a dummy, and as "Auction Whist." Some authorities believe Vint to be the forerunner of Bridge and class it in the Whist family. It is played by four persons as partners, just as Bridge. ⧣



Midwinter Dream World

WM. DUBOIS

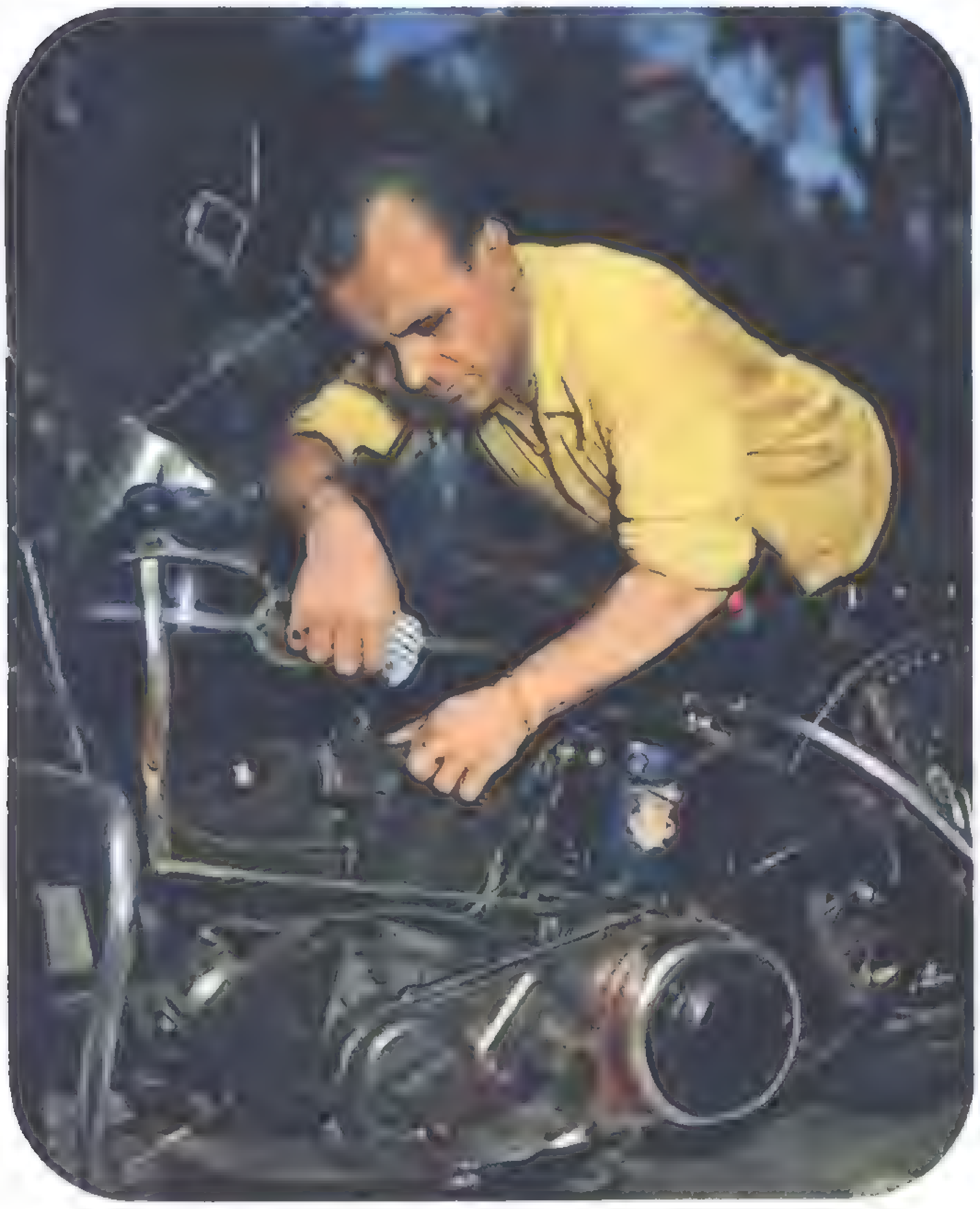
The microscopic bathing suits on the girls and the incredibly blue water on the Côte D'Azur are no longer vistas exclusively for billionaires

by RICHARD JOSEPH

Back in '44-'45 when postwar promises were a dime a dozen and everybody was telling everybody else what a world this would be, would-be travelers dreamed of the day when they could go places and see the world on their yearly vacations. Unlike so many of the rosy-edged dreams of those years, however, this one has come partially true.

For instance, plain ordinary Joe Smith can now take a vacation trip formerly available only to the all-winter-free-and-won't-you-come-cruising-in-my-yacht set.

He can dodge through the sleet and ice of a New York January to La Guardia Field Friday noon, take off, land in Paris early the next morning, transfer to a connecting plane, fly over the French Alps and set down at Nice while it's still Saturday morning, New York time. It's afternoon there, though, because of the time difference. Nevertheless he still has time to check into his hotel, climb into his sports clothes and drink in the sun by the blue-green Mediterranean before dinner. This at the French Riviera—La Côte d'Azur, old-world Garden of Eden, playground of the international smart set! And this eighteen or twenty hours after he'd slammed shut his desk drawer and delivered to his secretary the last passionate kiss of farewell.



HUBBELL

Alter Ego: Spark-plug Virtuoso

Catching José Iturbi away from his keyboard is easy, but whether to cast him as boxer, conductor or engine-tinkerer is more of a problem since he is expert at all of these. But the boys down at the garage, who may not give a castoff washer whether or not Mr. Iturbi's arpeggios in a Chopin Nocturne are the most sparkling in the business, are always glad to yield him space in the pit in which to waggle a screw driver or a pair of pliers. Here you see the educated ten fingers which thrilled thousands in Song To Remember *with an off-stage concert of triumphant perfection, trying to coax the same response from an unemotional set of plugs.*

He can spend thirteen days on the Riviera, leave on the morning of his fourteenth day, spend Saturday afternoon shopping and Saturday evening night-clubbing in Paris, have all day Sunday there, leave Sunday evening and be back in his New York office in time to give his secretary a friendly pat to help assuage her Monday morning grouch. All this on a two-week vacation.

Meanwhile he has danced at the fêtes in Nice, sailed off Cannes, sunned himself on the sands of St. Tropez and St. Raphael, rubbed tweed jackets with the Duke-of-Windsor set at Eden Roc, swum at Antibes, bought perfume at Grasse, driven to Valberg for Alpine skiing, climbed mountains from the valley of the Var, gone to break the bank at Monte Carlo, and seen the Italian frontier.

What it will cost: Biggest item is, of course, transportation. Round-trip air fare between New York and Nice is $696.20. In addition to one hundred dollars for gifts (maximum duty-free amount), we should expect to spend about twenty dollars a day for the fourteen days abroad.

At the time of writing, you can get a good room in an excellent hotel on the Riviera for eight to fifteen dollars a day, with meals, tax and tipping included. That leaves you approximately ten dollars a day for incidentals, which should be ample.

Legal rate of exchange in France is about 120 francs to the dollar. You can usually get at least twice as much for your dollars from the shifty characters who operate around cafés and railroad stations. However, the purchase of francs on the black market is not only dishonest, but also dangerous. French government inspectors know most of the angles, and you're liable to heavy fines if you're caught trying to turn a fast and shady buck.

Where to go and what to do: You'll have an unforgettable vacation no matter where you go on the Riviera. You might stop at one of the better-known resorts like Nice, Cannes, Monte Carlo, Juan-les-Pins, Antibes, St. Tropez, or Menton; or you may prefer one of the little hamlets along the coast, but, tourist trap or fishing village, you'll start dreaming of coming back someday as soon as you board the northbound plane for Paris.

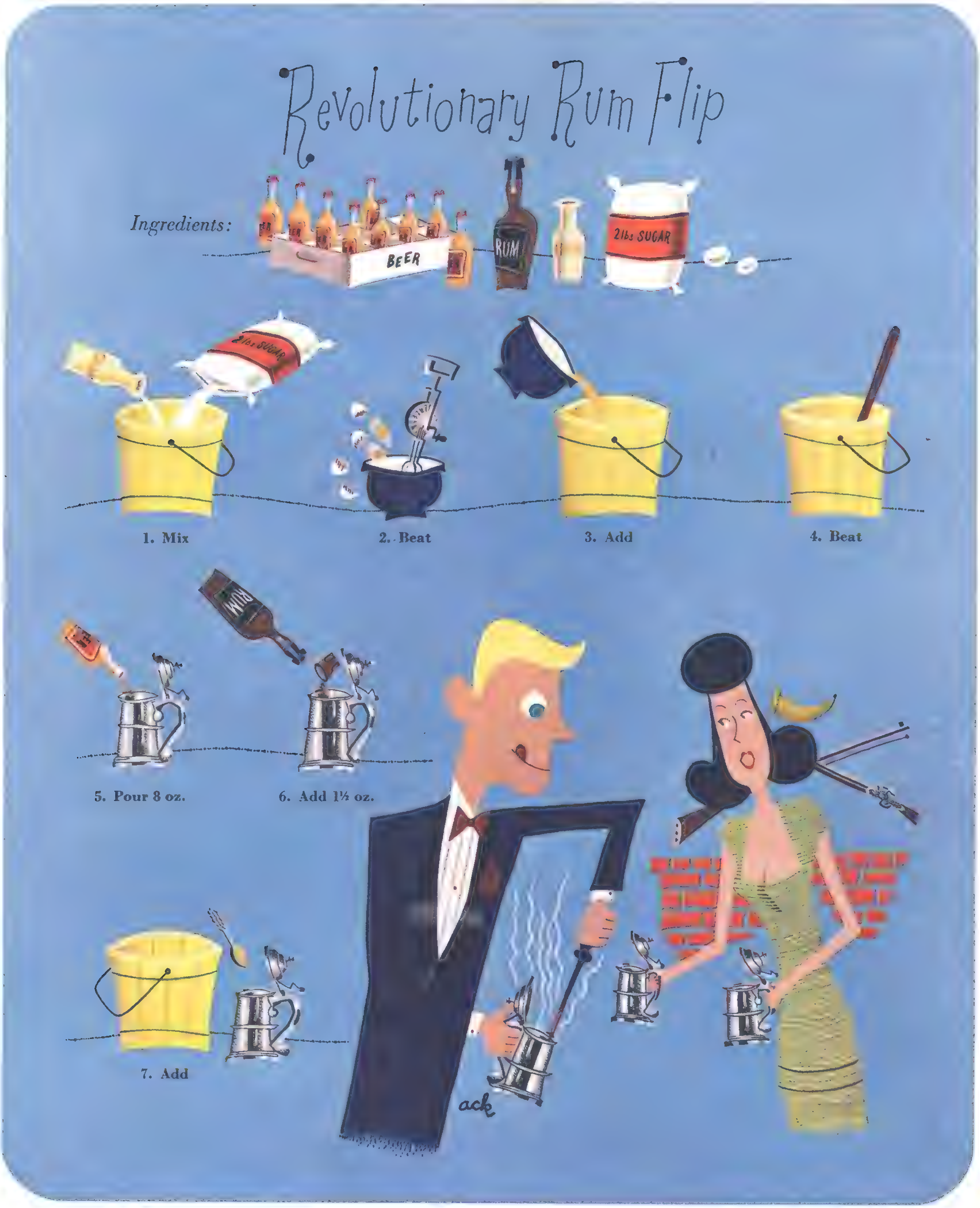
Nice is one of the centers of life on the Riviera. Its tree-lined Promenade des Anglais, bordered on one side by the sea and on the other by a line of luxury hotels and amusement places, is world-famous. Founded by the Greeks, taken by the Romans, owned by the French and claimed by Mussolini, Nice was ceded to the U.S. soldier by an Army order which established it as a rest center for enlisted men.

In Nice the sunny Mediterranean temperament is nourished by good, well-garlicked foods and watered by good red wine. Its Carnival, held early in February, combines elements of the New Orleans Mardi Gras and the carnival in Rio with a Gallic flavor and Italian spicing. Visitors wake up in the homes of the townspeople, the townspeople find themselves in the hotels of the visitors, everybody nurses a glorious hang-over and the whole town has had a magnificent time.

Smaller than Nice, Cannes was considered smarter by the gilded international playboys and girls who made the Riviera their winter headquarters between wars and are now returning in increasing numbers. It's the capital of the Riviera's British colony and the yachting center for the entire coast. If you can scrape up a conversation with some slim young thing on a hotel terrace and she happens to belong to one of the sleek, white yachts moored out in the harbor, you're in, brother, you're in.

Naturally you'll want to see Monte Carlo. It's only about ten miles from Nice and is highly reachable by car, bus or train. Monte Carlo is in the principality of Monaco, a separate, independent country with a national area of 370 acres, next to Vatican City the world's smallest state, and a story by itself. The

(Continued on page 192)


Revolutionary Rum Flip
Ingredients:
BEER
RUM
2 lbs SUGAR
1. Mix
2. Beat
3. Add
4. Beat
5. Pour 8 oz.
6. Add 1½ oz.
7. Add
ack

Esquire's
BLEND AND BEND
Recipe No. 8

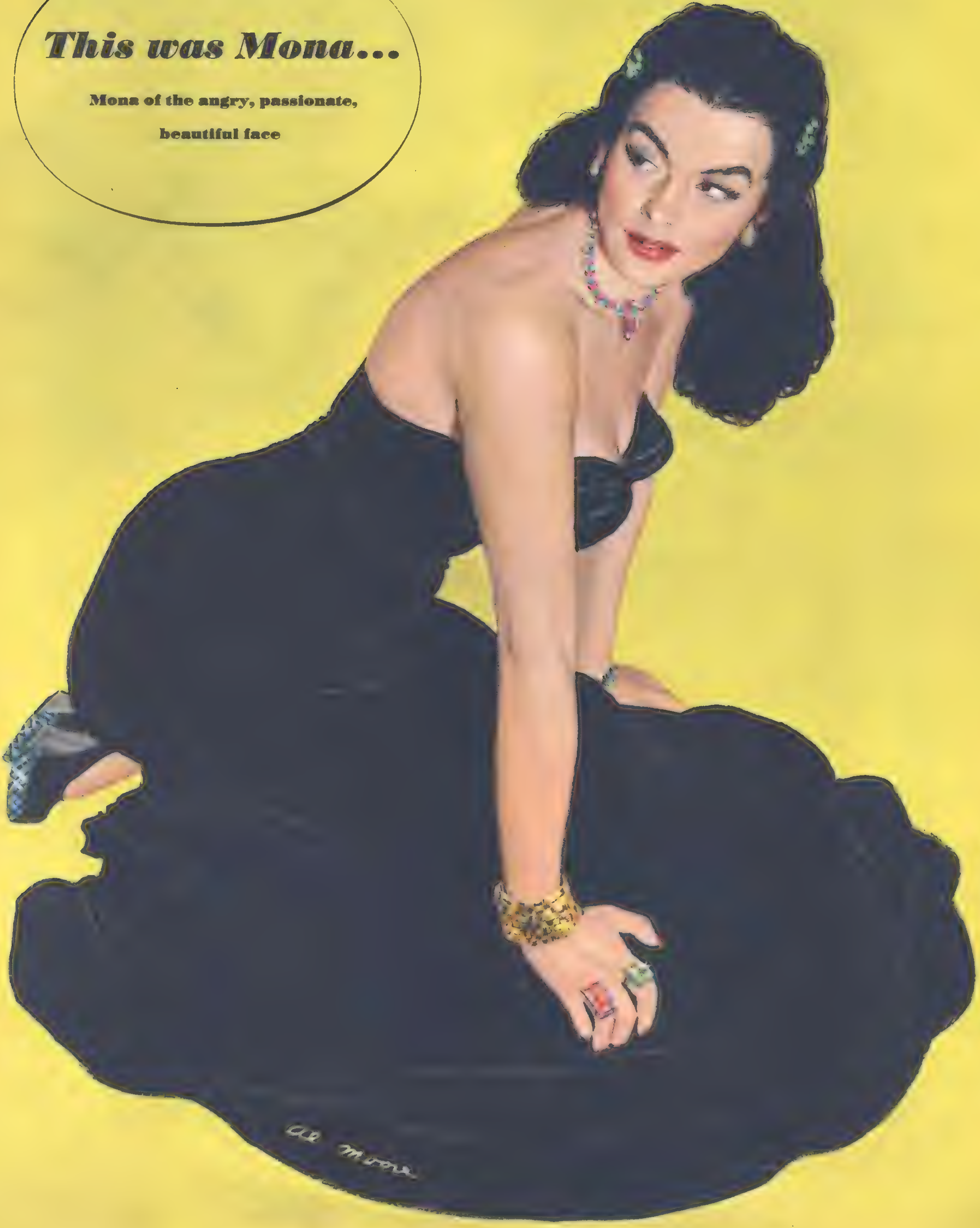
Sketches by Herb Ackerman

The history of the U. S. in the infant days of knee britches and tricornered chapeau was intimately associated with rum, and the most popular method of disposing of it was the Flip. A fine old Down East drink this, dating from prerevolutionary days when much of the populace spent a great deal of its time down at the sea in ships hauling rum from the West Indies. The base, a good three quarters, is beer, to which was added brown sugar, molasses or dried pumpkin as a sweetener. The rest: rum. More refined tavernkeepers later sweetened theirs with cream, sugar and eggs, but the red-hot poker remained, kept clean, hot and handy for stirring. Hardy citizens left out the sweetener, were left with a wicked concoction called "Calibogus."

This was Mona...

Mona of the angry, passionate,

beautiful face



Armchair in Hell

Mona Crawford was so terrific that even a tough private eye like Pete Chambers juggled his clues

A NOVEL BY HENRY KANE

EDITOR'S NOTE: A little while ago, Henry Kane stormed into the Esquire office, with his small mustache and larger biceps all aquiver and, with the air of a hunter who has returned with the kill, deposited a novel on our desk.

"We don't publish novels," we said.

"Read it," he said.

"We've never printed anything over 10,000 words. Go away."

"Read it."

We did, never believing that Kane could possibly sustain in a full-length book the excitement and tautness of his 4000-word specials on the dubious life and more dubious loves of Pete Chambers, a private eye with a sense of humor and a gift for relaxing on the lee side of an 8-ball.

Our answer is on these pages. *Armchair* knocked us right out of ours. Precedents broke all over the place and here, for the first time, Esquire publishes a book-length adaptation so that this man-sized Pete Chambers mystery reaches Esquire readers as soon as possible.

Simon and Schuster will publish *Armchair in Hell* in regular book form January 9, 1948.

Chapter I

THE devil was a dentist with a drill.

I was in an armchair in hell.

So I woke up: but the buzzing persisted.

I lay stiff and supine.

I lay stiff and prone.

I held my breath.

I let it go.

I wriggled.

Resolutely.

Then I slid my head beneath the pillow and I tried to crawl in after it, but I couldn't quite make it so I kicked off the covers and I put my legs down over the edge of the bed and I palmed my hands over my ears and I hung there, miserably.

The buzzing crystallized into sound with meaning.

Someone had dug his finger into the hole around my doorbell and it was endless, like music out of a juke box in the rear end of a gin mill.

I worked my eyes open and I groped for the light switch and I found it. It was five minutes after midnight by my wrist watch, which wasn't on my wrist nor on the night table, but askew amongst other trinkets on top of an untidy hill of miscellaneous clothes by the side of the bed.

I looked at the clothes disapprovingly. I spat thinly.

I got up and I clucked at my awful reflection in the mirror.

I went to the door.

"Well," I croaked. "Viggy O'Shea. A pleasure. Go home."

I slammed the door, I thought, in his face, but he had his foot in. The door bounced back like an adventurous wife. It chopped a chink in my big toe and I went into a buck and wing on one foot with dirty language for music.

Dimly I knew that that was no way to talk to Viggy O'Shea, and no way to act. Viggy O'Shea was a natural for a private richard and a private richard could be a very wealthy individual with only Viggy O'Shea as his entire clientele. That is, a private richard who didn't spend all his money all the time, no matter, always. And Viggy O'Shea was my very own client. Always had been. Mine alone.

He took hold of his nose.

I stopped my dance.

"What's with you?" I remarked.

"Just as I thought." He extended five fingers and he pushed, unlovingly, and I folded into a love seat.

He closed the door and he snapped the peg, which gave us bracket lights, and he stuffed his hat and coat into a closet. He took off his jacket, carefully, and he draped it across the back of a fan chair. He took off his tie and he sighed once, but gustily, and then he did an akimbo with his hands on his broad yaller belt and he glared at me.

I tried to glare back. I couldn't quite make it.

"All right. You're here. Nice of you to drop in. So curl up on the sofa and drop dead."

"Plastered," he said. "Just as I thought. Stiff as a bugle."

He took off his shirt and he took off his pants and he took off his shoes and his socks and his shorts and his undershirt. We were close, Viggy and I, we were swell friends, we were thick as cops around a corpse, but this was a very new one on me, an unexpected crinkle.

I wondered about it. Scatteringly.

"Up, bum," he said, naked in front of me.

"Viggy," I protested.

"Up," he said, and he drew the word out long.

He yanked me out of the chair and he took me out of my pajamas and he walked me to the bathroom and he pushed me into the stall shower and he got in with me and turned on the water and started pounding.

2

Coffee and more coffee.

Black and bitter.

I decided, suddenly, that two men wearing only a breakfast table between them were obscene. I hustled to the bedroom and put on a flannel robe and came back to the kitchen and tossed Viggy the top of my blue-and-gold silk pajamas.

"We've got work," he said, "chum-boy."

"Yes, Viggy. Put the thing on."

He jerked into the pajama top. He looked at me bitterly, questioningly.

"I lost a girl," I said. "I suffer."

He tinctured a snort with a sniff and a gurgle; then he eased out of the chair and I trailed him to the living room. Viggy in just a pajama top and a red-creased backside was Viggy the biggie, regardless. He took off the pajama top and he started dressing.

"You lost a girl," he said. "That's bad."

"Bad. The love of my life. The gracious Lolita."

"The love of his life. Get dressed. We've wasted a lot of time."

I went to the bedroom. I picked some underclothes from a drawer. "The love of my life," I grumbled.

I fought a pair of shorts.

He came to the door of the bedroom and buttoned his creamy broadcloth shirt and put in the tails.

"What?"

"The real damn love of my life. The gracious whatever her name is. Gave me the air."

"That's enough. I've heard that real damn love lament of yours before. You're glad to get rid of the lollipop. But it's another excuse for tying on a jag."

I sighed, one leg in my trousers and one leg out.

I twitched a little.

I pulled a couple of wet-terrier shakes.

He slapped me across the face. I lost my pants.

"Unnecessary," I said in a surprisingly

accurate tone of disdain; then I wiped my nose and found my pants and clambered into them and went looking for a shirt; but he came after me and he turned me around and he squeezed big hands on my shoulders and he left them there.

"Pull yourself together, for Chrissake. Please."

"Believe me," I said. "I'm together."

He went back to the living room.

I got into my socks and my shoes and I buttoned my shirt and put on my tie and knocked off a Duke of Windsor knot first crack, and then Viggy showed up again dressed all the way to the topcoat.

"How we doing?"

"Not bad."

"You ready?"

"What cooks?"

"I've got a dame at home."

"Lovely."

"In bed."

"Very lovely."

"A brunette."

"A brunette!" I yapped at him, nose to nose, and I waited a second, and then I went away and started pulling off my tie. "For that I'm taken out of a warm bed and pushed around. Because the guy is a nut on blondes."

"A dead brunette."

I shoved up my tie. It rammed my Adam's apple. It caught. I wheezed and I pulled, and it came apart. I stopped wheezing. I spluttered. Like a broken-down beer spigot.

Viggy put his hat on, neat and slanty over his eye.

3

He spread out and he sprawled in his corner of the cab, silent as the dummy minus Bergen.

Me too. In my corner.

I smoked and I looked out on the wet pavements of a murky morning in October. The misty unpeopled streets were silent too. It was one o'clock. It was Tuesday. It was cold. It had rained. There was fog.

The cab pulled up and we got out and Viggy paid off and we went up the four steps of a four-step stoop and Viggy poked at the bell and nothing happened. Viggy lived on East Seventy-sixth Street, squash amongst the swanky-panks, in a narrow two-story house set back from the building line, fronted by a tiny grass lawn split in the middle by a sidewalk-path leading to the steps.

He cursed softly and he pushed the bell again.

Nothing happened.

He pushed it again and cursed louder, growlingly. He looked at me, and he stuck out his lower lip and his eyelids wrinkled; then he looked back at the wide dark-red door with the silvery latticework and he kicked at it, once, with the point of his shoe.

"According to you," I said, "the lady isn't in a position to answer a doorbell."

He shivered. Slightly. It was damp out.

"Shaddap," he said.

He got his keys out and he opened the door quickly and we hung our hats and coats on an old-fashioned hall tree in the foyer. Light streamed through an arched doorway on the right. Farther back to the right a steep stairway rose, grey-carpeted. Light streamed, also, from behind the stairs.

I knew the house: a cellar, a ground floor, a first floor and a second floor (and what a cellar). The archway on the right was the drawing room, and the kitchen was behind the stairs.

I edged over and peeked into the spacious drawing room.

An intricate chandelier spread light over heavy grouped furniture and a thick Chinese rug, and light jumped back in reflected bunches from a massive rectangular shining thick-wood table in the middle of the room, topped with a long strip of white lace doily and three silver vases with artificial flowers. Ten carved-back chairs with red velvet seats surrounded the table, a chair at either end.

Solidly, a man sat with his back to us in the chair at the foot of the table. Quietly. A man with a high proud plume of wavy iron-grey hair. I couldn't see his face. He didn't turn around. It wasn't that he was impolite: it was more that a knife was in his back, high, in a corner, the snub hilt pointing back at us like a stiff tongue pushed out in derision.

Chapter II

It shakes you up when you've got a dead brunette in bed on your mind and then you get hit with a guy in a red velvet seat with a knife in him.

I waded through lush rug and I touched him and I came back to Viggy in the doorway.

Viggy didn't see me.

"Charlie," he whispered. "Charlie Batesem."

I looked at him.

"What's the matter with you? Charlie's bald."

Viggy didn't see me.

He turned and he ran down the hall and he ducked in under the stairs. I went after him. I collided with his hard flat back at the threshold to the kitchen.

I looked past his shoulder.

There was blood on the yellow linoleum.

There was a lot of blood. There was so much blood I felt faint and I'm in the business. Charlie's bald head gleamed in the midst of it like bright snow on a garbage heap, Charlie with a wide-slit gaping neck and a secret smile on his tilted face and his teeth milk-white against tight blue lips.

My stomach ridged and I jerked when Viggy slid a cold finger along my balled-up fist.

Spongily he said, "All right. Let's go upstairs." His face was the color of the linoleum and his black eyebrows were pulled together hard and his lips were dry and puckered.

I followed him up the carpeted steps.

He opened the first door on the left and he clicked the light on. On top of the bed, over a coral silk coverlet, a woman lay with her arms out and her palms up, supplicatingly: a small, dark-haired, sallow-faced nude woman, with popping eyes and a wax skin and an open throat.

No blood. No blood at all.

2

I went shot for shot with Viggy, three times, from good-sized glasses on a tray with a decanter on an antique piece in the drawing room. He pulled back one of the heavy carved-back chairs and he sat down. I stayed with the decanter.

"Nice, huh?" he said. His color was better.

"Nice," I said.

The phone rang. I started for it. Viggy stopped me.

It rang some more. Then it stopped ringing.

Viggy rapped the middle knuckle of his right hand against his teeth. "I don't get it. I feel like a refugee out of a bughouse. I don't know what the hell this is all about. First there's that dead female up there in my bedroom. I never saw her before in my life. That's trouble, so I call you on the phone and when it doesn't answer, I shoot right out to look for you like I always do when there's real trouble. I cannot afford to wait. Charlie and this other mug are right here in this room talking when I leave. I wouldn't send Charlie. I go myself. I always go myself. I know you. You're hard to find or you're hard to persuade or maybe you're home, cockeyed. And *now* look what we got. Charlie and this other louse. What the hell is going on here?"

"Who's he?" I said and I took another little snifter and I pointed with my thumb. My stomach was warm and I was beating a hang-over and I was ashamed of having felt faint and I was all ready to play detective.

Viggy hardly glanced at him. "A dealer. From Los Angeles."

Viggy kept his elbow on the table and rubbed his forehead with his middle finger and thumb and he looked like he didn't know it, but he was trying to remember something.

"One of your boys?" I said.

"Not that kind of dealer. A business guy. A dealer in art stuff."

"Legit?"

"Mostly."

"And the woman upstairs?"

"You dumb? Or drunk? Or trying to be a smart detective? I told you I never saw that tomato before in my life."

Suddenly he punished the edge of the table with a handful of slapping fingers.

I jumped. I upset the cut-glass whiskey bottle, but nothing spilled. I righted it.

"The valise," he said and he looked at me as if I knew what he was talking about. "The goddam valise. It wasn't up there."

He shoved back the chair and I heard him pound up the stairs and I heard the banging of doors.

"The hell with this," I said and I knocked over another embracer, and another one, and I choked up and coughed and put the glass down and looked at the man way down at the foot of the table.

He was a grave-looking chap, about fifty-five, with a smooth salesman's expression frozen on his dark face. If he were alive, he'd be rubbing his hands together, chummily; his thoughts had been pleasant, he had been making money right up to when he stopped thinking.

I went over and touched his hand. It was smooth as goose-grease; warm, unset.

Viggy came back.

"How the hell do you like that?" he said. "No valise."

"No valise?" I said witheringly.

Ungracefully I took his lapels in my hands and I brought him over and I hoped my breath stank of whiskey. "Three stiffs in the house. Assorted. And this guy is worrying me about a satchel. Let's get normal, big shot."

"Let's go in there." He pointed across the hall with his pinky.

3

The room was a small edition of the drawing room, antiques and all, but no decanter.

Viggy heaved into a corner of a flowered rust couch.

He whisked at his curly black hair and he rubbed at the bristles of his beard and he wedged his wrist between his teeth, meditatively. He took it out. He pushed his feet out all the way and he shoved his hands into stiff-legged trouser pockets.

Viggy was tall and dark and handsome and broad-shouldered, with a high forehead and a pointed nose and a wide mouth and excellent teeth. Right now he was ugly. Strained-spread lines from nose to mouth edge were nail deep and brown as iodine streaks. He sucked in his upper lip and he stuck out his lower lip, fretfully and angrily, and he twitched, occasionally, underneath one eye. He said nothing for a few minutes and then he said: "I'll tell you a story," and his gambler's voice was level and conversational.

"Not now, you won't, daddy."

He cocked his head. It sidled on his shoulders, sloped as a sailor's hat. "You all right?"

"*I'm* all right. *You're* the problem. You're tired. You've had a deal pulled on you. So I let you rest for a few minutes, but, daddy, you just ain't thinking right."

"Okay, brains. Okay and okay. That's what I've got you for."

"Swell. There's a lot of time been wasted around here. Dead people in the house are dangerous. Especially for you. So first you go looking for valises and then you sit and stare and now you want to tell stories. See what I mean?"

Wearily he said, "I suppose so."

"You're not an ordinary customer. An ordinary customer picks up the phone and he calls the cops and he says, 'I've got dead people in the house,' and he's through. Then the dead people in the house are someone else's headache. Not you. You're a special kind of customer."

He pulled in his feet and he got up and he ran a wet tongue across dry lips and he made a point of his chin and he started putting heel prints on the rug. "All right. Lecture period is over. Where do we go from here?"

"Now you're Viggy O'Shea," I approved. "First we get them out of here. Later, I listen to the story. After that, we measure angles."

Splashingly, thick streams of rain gusted against the windows. I went over and looked out.

Rain danced on an empty street.

"It's marbling," I said. "It's a fine night for sneaking around with corpses."

"I wish Ma were here," Viggy said.

Absently I said, "Yeah," and I looked at dripping window panes—then I looked back at him, fast:

"*What?*"

Simply he said: "Ma."

"That's what I thought. Take it easy, pal. Tighten up, for the love of Christ. We've got a tough night in front of us."

Morosely he advised me not to worry about Viggy.

"Then what is this with Ma? You're a big boy now."

He produced his sick stand-in for a grin. For a moment. Then he forgot it. "Ma is Marmaduke. Marmaduke is my butler. My butler would be a help."

Perplexedly I said: "You've got a butler?"—and then blood got busy in my head like noon in the Automat. "Where *is* your butler?"

"I don't know."

"Since when you got a butler?"

"The last three months."

"Well . . ." I said.

"Well, nothing. Ma is an old Englishman who is strictly all right. Used to work for Roachie Turner. For fifteen years. When Roachie got married, Ma quit and I took him over. He's a bachelor's butler, exclusively. He won't get mixed up with women."

"Like me."

"Yeah."

"Why isn't he here?"

"He's had a vacation for a month."

"Why?"

"I've been out of town. I've been in L.A."

"When'd you get back?"

"Today. Couple of hours ago. I came in with Charlie and the dealer. Direct from L.A. We called up a guy on business and he came over and we had a little conference and the guy left and then I brought the valise upstairs to my bedroom and I saw that naked package someone had left for me. So I scooted out for you."

"Did this Ma know you were due back?"

"Yes. I wired him. He should have been here. It would bother me, if I had the time, but I don't have the time, not with corpses around here like confetti."

"It bothers *me*. Is this a resident butler?"

"No. Eight o'clock to eight o'clock, unless I need him earlier or later."

"Where does he live? Do you know?"

"Of course I know."

"I mean offhand."

"Lives at Seventy-nine Lexington Avenue."

"Any more?"

"Second floor, front apartment."

I went out of the room. I went across the hall into the drawing room. I didn't look at the dealer from Los Angeles who was mostly legit. I went over and got the decanter and injected a little direct, and I brought the decanter and a glass back to Viggy. I poured a real dose for him.

"Have a drink," I said. "On me."

He drank it. He said, "I don't get it."

"I'm going to Seventy-nine Lexington Avenue. I'm going right away. You claim you know nothing from nothing. Maybe our Marmaduke knows the same nothing from nothing. But maybe he doesn't. And if he doesn't, we sort of ought to know that. And right away. So you and I split assignments."

"You're boss."

"Do you know how to steal a car?"

He picked up his eyebrows. He put them down. "I've learned a lot of things in my day. I know how to steal a car."

I took him by the hand and I sat down with him on the couch. Very explicitly I said: "These are instructions. You clean up here. You clean up that kitchen. You keep the bottle handy. You'll need it. You clean up, all over. You get that woman down from upstairs and you get Charlie out of the kitchen and you get Mister Dealer out of the parlor. You leave the knife in him. You don't touch it. You assemble them in the foyer. Then you go out in the rain and you pick up a car. You're very careful about fingerprints. You wear gloves. You think you can manage it?"

Viggy didn't answer.

"You're Viggy O'Shea," I said. "You're big stuff. You've got brains and talent and imagination and daring. You couldn't have reached to where you've gotten without all of that. So I'm not worried about you. But keep the bottle handy. It's a nasty job."

He looked at the bottle, lifted it and snatched one.

"Why me?"

"Which means what, exactly?"

"Which means, exactly, what the hell do I have you for if *I've* got to steal automobiles and garnish them up like wagons out of the morgue?"

I pulled breath into my chest, indignant. "Listen very carefully. Remember me? Pete Chambers. I make a living by virtue of a fragile license issuing from a sensitive Secretary of State. But fragile. And sensitive. Here we've got a clambake that's strictly your party, *your* trouble. If *I* get caught transporting around with dead ones—I'm out of the box, out of the running, out of work. For life. If *you* get caught, it's the same trouble, and how much worse can it get? But then you'd still have me around, license and all, doing a job for you." I heaved for more breath and let it out, whistlingly. "What's the sense to sticking my neck out, when yours is already out, all the way?"

Viggy considered that.

"Plus," I said, "we've got a missing butler. That's *my* department. Believe me, it says it in all the instruction books."

"I buy it." He shook his head, tight-mouthed. "I don't like it. At all. But I buy it."

"Smart. A few extra details. You're going to have to strip them down. Clean. You'll see if that woman's clothes are around. My hunch is they aren't. You'll peel the boys in the car. How'm I doin'?"

"I don't know. Why the stripless striptease?"

"Because I don't want them tied in with you. I want them unidentified as long as possible."

"But they know Charlie."

"So what?"

"They know Charlie's my gun-boy."

"So what? They'll have Charlie dead and naked with a strange couple, also dead and naked. They can't bring that home to you. Not quick. So they ask you about Charlie. So you still know nothing from nothing. Charlie has his private affairs. This was one of them."

Viggy leaned back and half-closed his dark eyes.

"Very, very risky," he understated dreamily.

"I am aware of that. You and I know how to volley with light words about dead bodies that we don't give a spit in all hell about. You and I can be precious about cadavers. We can be pleasant and flippant. Like interns. You're a hard-used young man and I'm in a bastard business—we've seen them come and we've seen them go, enough of them, in our time. So we talk about them like people talk about soft-shell crabs."

"All I said was that it's risky, professor."

"I'm coming to that. There are two sets of risks, so to speak, and we've got to balance them. Your visitors can't stay here. If the law got something like that on you—*three* of them—they'd pin one of them on you. You'd fry, sure as crepes Suzette. *One* of them, they'd pin on you. They'd play tick-tack-toe till one of them fit, but pin they would; they've been waiting for a long time to catch you and this would be it. So the risk of dumping them is less than the risk of leaving them hang around and visit until somebody sees one of them and starts screaming. See what I mean?"

Viggy got up and put the bottle and the glass on an end table. "Okay, philosopher. Get going."

"One more thing. Two, that is. You burn the clothes and the gloves in your furnace downstairs. Then you clean out the ashes and stuff and get rid of them."

"By-by, boy friend."

"By-by, chum. I'll meet you in Lindy's. Later. We both ought to be through in a couple of hours. You can tell me stories there."

"I hope you know what you're doing," Viggy said and he sighed—but smorzando.

Chapter III

Rain slammed at the brim of my hat and I looked around for a cab and, of course, there was no cab. I buttoned my topcoat high and pulled my hat down low, but it made no difference. I was wet to the shirttails by the time I sloshed up to the Lexington Avenue I.R.T. at Seventy-seventh Street, and being wet to the shirttails is not the most agreeable sort of wetness when you sit on a slow dank jolting local all the way to Twenty-third Street.

I dragged cold unhappy feet up the subway steps and I grabbed a few ounces of tonic in the first saloon that winked at me and then I went looking for Seventy-nine Lexington, which wasn't too far. Tonic was good for wetness in the shirttails; I stood outside number seventy-nine and looked it over with jittering knees, but the rest of me had stopped shaking.

Seventy-nine was an old house, dirt-colored, five stories high with beige shirred curtains on double doors, and a protruding lock. You didn't have to be a sopping-wet, tonic-inspired detective to know enough to put the edge of a dime into the keyhole and open the door.

The lobby smelled of German-cooked cabbage soup and it hissed of steam and it was close as newsprint on a scratch sheet, which was fine by me. It was small and square; in back a stairway cut through with stone steps and a brass bannister. In front, an oblong alloy plaque was part of the wall, with slit-topped, bell-bottomed letter boxes and names.

I looked at names. It came to me that Marmaduke was a first name. I didn't care. I looked for Marmaduke anyway. I was warming up in this unventilated hothouse of a lobby and my vibrating kneecaps were slowing down. There was no Marmaduke. None of the ten names was familiar to me.

I went up two flights of dim stairs and I knocked at the door of the front apartment.

Nothing.

I knocked again. Louder.

Same nothing.

I turned the knob, softly, and the door swung in, and I helped with my foot, lightly, and it swung all the way and the inside knob tapped against a wall. The small light bulb in the hall behind me provided a faint yellow sifting shaft of illumination.

I waited.

Silence.

I moved into the room, slowly, and I reached out with my right hand for the knob and I closed the door and I leaned an ominously itching shoulder blade against it and I stood there in the darkness and waited, listening to the sound of my breathing; and then I knew why I was waiting.

The sound of the breathing I was listening to—wasn't mine.

2

My right hand slid inside my topcoat and inside my jacket and under my left armpit and stopped.

No gun, no holster.

Just shirt, and wet shirt.

I left it there for effect, just in case, and I scraped the other hand along the wall exploring for a light switch.

I found it and I clicked it.

A room sprang at me: a clean, spare, fastidious room. A man's room with a black-and-red linoleum and a leather couch and a drop-leaf table and chairs and a radio and a midget refrigerator and closets and a dark-wood kneehole desk—*with knees.*

The knees wore tan flannel pants ending at bare ankles embroidered with clothesline, firmly attached to the legs of the desk chair. Going up, there was a brown belt and a neat white open-collared shirt, and going down again there were hands, separately tied to the back of the chair. On top was a narrow white-haired head with a high forehead and stuck-out bunches of veins like knots in an old telephone cord.

The rest of the face was buried in the open shirt-collar, chin down.

I moved.

I got to the guy and I pried his chin out. His face was grey like the ash off a good cigar and I slapped it quietly and I rubbed it and he complained, bubblingly, from somewhere inside his chest. I let the chin go and it got tucked in again inside the open shirt-collar.

I shed my hat and topcoat and I went to work on the clothesline. Someone had done a tightly competent job. It took me five minutes to get the guy unhooked.

I rubbed his wrists and I rubbed his ankles. Then I set him up on reluctant legs and he leaned on me and he began to shake like he was a daiquiri and I was the bartender. I held him, carefully, and he danced in my arms for a couple of minutes; then he sagged. I carried him over to the leather couch.

I sat him up, but he keeled.

I tried again, but he keeled again.

I let him lie.

There was another door which was a bedroom when I put the light on, and another door which was a bathroom, so I went back and started with the refrigerator and gave the room a double-quick canvass. In a closet over the radio I found a bottle with a scratched-off label. It smelled like gin. It could have been vodka (I don't smell so good when I'm drinking), it could even have been kummel. I tasted it. It was gin. I tasted it again. It was still gin. I tasted it some more while I made the trip over to Marmaduke on the sofa.

I pulled his jaw down and now he tasted it, but he didn't know it was gin. Yet. It ran out of the side of his mouth and he made sounds like an infant-burping formula. I shifted and poured some into the other side of his mouth.

He began to know it was gin.

He groaned and he rumbled and he opened his eyes and he batted them like the girl in the varsity show defending her virtue with repartee. Then he closed his eyes and he closed his mouth and he blew gin bubbles from a little whistle-hole he'd left in his lips; stiffly.

I slapped his face, unquietly and impatiently, each side, forehand and backhand, and fast. He drew up his lids and he showed me reproachful eyes.

"Marmaduke," I said.

"Yes, sir."

"How are you, Marmaduke?"

"I am all right, sir. Thank you."

"Feel better?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

Then his eyes rolled up.

I did some more face tennis on him. I took hold of thin bones in his shoulders and I rattled and his eyes rolled down.

"Have a slug of gin." I showed him how.

"No, sir," he said with admirable firmness. "I do not partake of intoxicants. I keep it for my maiden sister. She visits sometimes in the mornings . . ."

His eyes began to go. I shook them down. "Marmaduke," I said. "You don't look so good. I insist."

"If you insist, sir . . ."

He grabbed one from the bottle, sitting up halfway, leaning on his elbow. He grabbed a good gurgling shot.

He ramrodded.

He sat up, spine-straight, on the backless leather sofa, teeteringly. He belched: deeply, apologetically, pathetically, palpitatingly.

One expressive belch.

Then he gave me hurt and startled eyes.

"Good boy," I said. "It'll help."

One eye began a slow ascent.

I slapped him on the back. "Sit up against the wall. Like this." I propped him up. "Can you sit like that while I make some coffee?"

"Coffee?" he piped. "Oh, yes, sir. I would like that."

Marmaduke, I hoped, was coming around the bend.

I patted his face. I looked around. "Where?"

He pointed to what appeared to be a cupboard but which opened up into a kitchen, a built-in kitchen, a good and built-in kitchen—if you spread your elbows, you were lapped over back again in the living room. I hurriedly compounded coffee which was more poison than coffee and I administered it to Marmaduke hot and floating with grinds.

It smartened him up. Fast. "Who are you? What are you doing here? Sir."

"I'm a friend of Mr. O'Shea's. He was worried."

"I haven't eaten since yesterday," he said.

I went back to the kitchen-on-a-shelf and I found an egg beater and I whipped up a couple of eggs and a glass of milk and I covered up while I seasoned it, liberally, with gin instead of nutmeg. I took his empty cup away and gave him the stepped-up nog. "It's good. Drink it and we'll talk. I've really got to get the hell out of here."

"Oh, thank you, sir."

I sat down alongside of him. He smiled at me. The knots in his forehead had flattened out and his face had brightened from ash-grey to apple-green and his eyes had stopped lingering at the top fringe of the sockets; now they stayed in the middle with all the verve and sparkle of a couple of dry blue blots of ink.

"What goes here, Marmaduke?" I said in the best tone of insouciance I could muster. "How come I find you fastened to a chair?"

"Oh that, sir."

"Yes, sir."

He sipped nog. "Well, sir. This morning, I was taking my usual morning shower. At about seven-thirty, sir. I had been expecting my sister. She usually visits the first part of the week. To clean up a bit for me. She is a cook, sir. Not due at her place of employment until ten o'clock . . ."

He gave me the rest of it. He had rattled back the curtain on his early morning ablution and he was dried and almost dressed, when the tap came on the door. He had called, "Come in"—he had snapped the catch because he was expecting his sister. He had poked his head out of the bathroom door, and he had been smitten behind the ear, and he had closed his eyes as happens when you are smitten behind the ear, and when he had opened them again, he was a fixed appurtenance by the desk in the apartment.

"See anybody?" I said.

"No, sir."

"Hear anybody?"

"No, sir. Only the tap on the door."

I got up. "Where are your keys?"

"In my jacket, sir."

"Where is your jacket, goddam it?"

"Please, sir."

"Where is it?"

"In the closet."

"Closet? You're going to have to be more specific. A cupboard is a kitchen in this trick apartment. I'm liable to open what I imagine to be a closet door and fall out of a window."

"Over there."

He pointed.

I opened a closet door. "What jacket?"

"The blue one."

I brought the one blue jacket to him. He put his hand in one pocket, then he put his hand in the other pocket, then he put his hand back in the first pocket. Then he shook the jacket. No chimes. No jingle. No tinkle. No nothing. He looked at me and he smiled and he gave me the jacket and he put both hands back around the glass and he finished his comforter. "An excellent eggnog, sir. Tangy."

"Keys," I said.

"In my blue jacket."

"I am holding your blue jacket."

"Yes, sir."

"Keys, goddam it."

"Please, sir."

"Keys."

Marmaduke handed up the empty glass and he sighed, flutteringly. "There are no keys, it appears."

"Where else could they be?"

"Nowhere, sir. Whatever intruder smote me, probably that person—it is possible, that person made away with them."

"Astute," I said. "Do you have a phone?"

"No, sir."

"Your sister have a phone?"

"No, sir."

"Where does she live?"

"Ninety-one First Avenue. Near Sixth Street. 1A."

I tossed his jacket on a chair. I put the glass on the desk. I got my hat and topcoat. "I'll drop in on her. I'll have her come over and take care of you tonight. A little oatmeal and a little sleep, and tomorrow you report to work as usual."

"Without keys, sir?"

"That's your problem. And Viggy O'Shea's."

3

It was pouring out. A miraculous broken-down cab floated by and I folded my tongue and I whistled and it stopped and shifted gears like an earthquake and it floated back and I floated in. I said, "Ninety-one First Avenue," and I sat on my tippety-tip and opened my arms and took hold of the abrasive catches of both unclosed rattling doors, protectively, and I sat there like a man who is losing his oars in a bouncing rowboat, all the way to Sixth Street.

"Wait here," I said to the cabbie. "And your doors don't close."

"You said it, friend. They stink."

"A guy could fall out."

"You said it, friend. You want me to wait?"

"Wait right here. Friend."

The downstairs door wasn't locked. 1A was a ground floor apartment. I pushed the bell. I lit up and took a few drags and stepped on it. I pushed again. Someone said, "Who's that?"

"Marmaduke sent me."

The door opened. A long woolen blue-striped nightgown topped by a blur of face was dim in the doorway. "What? What's that?"

I closed my eyes. Marmaduke's gin was unfriendly in my stomach. "Your brother wants you."

"How would *you* know?"

I opened my eyes. The blur of a face hadn't improved. My stomach and Marmaduke's gin continued at odds. I closed my eyes. "He wants you right away. He doesn't feel well. He wants to know why you weren't there this morning."

"I slept. I've got a right to sleep. That Marmaduke. He should have been a woman. What business is it of yours?"

"No business. I'm only delivering a message for Marmaduke. Checking, sort of. Good night, ma'am."

She slammed the door. I opened my eyes. My relic of a taxicab received me.

"Fifty-ninth and Sixth Avenue," I said.

I took hold of the door catches. We spurted home, joltingly.

Outside my apartment house, I said, "Now you wait again, Jackson." His name on the orange card was Jackson Tomashefski and his picture didn't agree with Marmaduke's finicky gin either.

"How do I know you're coming out," he said, "this time?"

"A just question, Jackson, but if I pay you, how do I know you'll wait?"

"That's a just question, too, friend."

"Come on up with me, Jackson. That'll settle it. You need a drink with all this rain."

"You talked me into it, friend."

He held the door for me, and he bowed.

Upstairs, I poured him a half tumbler of rye and he said, "Thanks. It's a beautiful joint you got here," and I said, "Yeah," and I poured myself a full tumbler of water with a heaping teaspoonful of baking soda. I got rid of my wet things and I got into woolen slacks and a heavy sport shirt and dry socks and shoes and a thick jacket and my raincoat and rain hat.

"We're on our way, Jackson. Lindy's next stop. Forgive me, won't you, but this time I really can't invite you. I've got a date with a guy."

"Thanks just the same. You ain't a bad egg." He squinted at me. "Even though you got dates with *guys* for four o'clock in the morning."

Chapter IV

I sat in a booth in Lindy's and I polished off a plump marinated herring, filleted and swimming in sour-cream sauce. Then, of course, I ordered cheesecake.

Cheesecake melted in my mouth and I washed it down with coffee and more cheesecake melted and more coffee washed it down, but I couldn't get my mind off three dead bodies in a stolen car. Actors waved at me and I waved back at actors, and the women were beautiful, and bright laughter merged with perfume and cigar smoke, and coffee was hot and satisfying and I was a hard-boiled detective who took his business in stride, but the three dead bodies kept popping up in my head like the three blind mice in the folk song.

I disciplined myself. I waved at more actors and more actors waved back at me. I thought about Viggy O'Shea. Exclusively.

Viggy was an honest gambler. A rich, influential, powerful, honest gambler; which made him as popular as ear muffs in Bermuda. Nobody loves an honest gambler. Except the customers. The mayor and the police commissioner called Viggy everything from tinhorn to national menace, depending upon the state of their ulcers, and oh how they'd have loved to pin a rap on him, which is why the great O'Shea came scampering to me, like a pregnant woman to the doctor, at the first hint of trouble, ever. An honest gambler makes gambling respectable, which doesn't sit well with the keepers of the peace, because what are you going to use for speeches over the radio come election time?

Viggy had a joint in New York and a joint in Chicago and a joint in Reno and a joint in Miami (seasonal) and a joint in Los Angeles. Nobody touched his joints. Nobody even went near them, except for pastime. There are bigger people than mayors and police commissioners. There are governors and senators and congressmen and there are guys with slim cigars and sun-tanned faces and frosted hair-do's that gather in caucuses once every four years, and Viggy sugared and salted and buttered-down and ponied-up, and he spread it in all of the right places; and for icing, the accumulated bounced checks he had from biggies (uncollected and unpublicized) would make an autograph hound's tongue hang and tail twitter.

So nobody touched his joints.

He had a partner once, a guy I'd never met but a guy I'd heard a lot about, the Little Guy, by name—but that's for another time. Right now I was thinking about Viggy O'Shea, exclusively, in order not to think about three cold bodies in a kidnapped car...

More cheesecake melted in my mouth and I was beginning to get sick, cloyingly, when I saw Viggy mixed up with Lindy's revolving door. I waved at him and an actor waved back at me and I made a face and another actor waved at me—and Viggy saw me.

He bent his knees and he slid in opposite me.

"Glad to see you," I said.

Jake Teitel, the waiter came between us. "Yes, gents?"

"Rye," Viggy ordered. "Two ryes. Soda."

"No liquor," the waiter said. "It's after-hours, Mr. O'Shea."

It was ten minutes after four.

"Coffee and cheesecake," Viggy said. "Cheesecake for him too."

"No cheesecake," I said. "Coffee."

The waiter said, "Fine, gents," and he went away, and I said, "Well?"

"Okay."

"Smooth?"

"Perfect."

"Everything?"

"Yes."

"Where'd you park it?"

"Over by the pier. On Fifty-seventh Street."

The waiter brought cheesecake and coffee in a pot and clean fresh cups. Viggy poured and drank it black, no sugar, and poured again.

"I hope you earn your fee," he said.

"What fee?"

"The fee I'm paying you."

"How much fee you paying me?"

"I'm paying you seventy-five hundred dollars' worth of fee."

I looked the gift horse in the mouth (not a good habit): "Why seventy-five hundred dollars? Why not forty-five hundred dollars? Why not ninety-five hundred dollars?"

Through cheesecake he said, "My brother Denny has seventy-five hundred of mine. I'm supposed to pick it up in the morning at his office. I'll give you a note. You pick it up, and it's a fee. That's why seventy-five hundred."

"I'll have to remember that. It's a very logical way of arriving at a fee for services rendered."

"To be rendered."

He scribbled on the back of an envelope and he gave it to me. It said, "Denny, give Pete the seventy-five hundred. Vig."

I put the envelope away. "What services to be rendered?"

"I want to know what the hell is going on. I want to know fast. I want to know before I get rung in on it. Those services to be rendered."

"If you're still in the mood," I said, "for telling stories—this is when."

The twitch under his eye had worsened. He looked tight and scratchy like the wire string on a fiddle. "I'm in the mood. It's a story about a Frenchman. Pierre Vy—Pierre something. Vyseuseau. He's at the Waldorf. Suite 1212."

"Yes?"

"That's the other guy that was in the house today."

"A real Frenchman, or a home-grown Frenchman?"

"A French Frenchman. Fresh over. Well, fresh over, roundabout."

"So?"

"This guy contacts me a couple of months ago. No. He contacts the Little Guy. Then he contacts me."

"The Little Guy?" I said. Appreciatively.

A glimmer woke up in his eyes; a dull shine like the flat glint of nailheads in a saddle-leather chair. "My partner, years back, till we split on policy. I don't believe in loan-sharking around the tables. He runs a juicy bistro uptown with a back room and an upstairs. Everything phony, from the roulette wheel to the stick-men."

"I know all about him," I said. "I'm barred from up there. I suppose it's because I'm a friend of yours. I've never seen the guy. I've tried a few times. On business. The hell with that. Is it kosher? I mean, is it kosher that first he sees him and then he contacts you?"

"He got a lead on the Little Guy in Argentina. He also got a lead on me. He talked to the Little Guy. Then he talked to me."

"All right. What about?"

"A deal. A big deal. A deal for two million smackeroos, with an extra half million thrown in for me. That's cabbage. So I don't care much about the kosher. I like a deal like that."

"Now wait a minute. If you please."

I took out cigarettes. I offered him one. He shook his head. I lit up. I pushed the dishes away and I put my elbows on the table. I said, "Give it to me now, once and for all, slow and clear. And coherent. Start from scratch."

"Shut up and I will."

I shut up.

He said, "I'm in the office at the Club an evening a few months ago and Fat the Butcher comes in and he tells me there's a well-dressed Frog with an accent wants to talk to me. I said why not, and Fat shows him in."

"The Frenchman Pierre."

"He talks around for a couple of minutes, sizing me, and I let him, and then right away he's in the middle of it. He tells me he's talking for a syndicate backed up by the French government, and he's working to recover some stuff that was promoted out of his country, and that he thinks I could help. He shows me credentials. For what they're worth."

"What kind of stuff?" I said.

"Tapestry."

"How's that?"

"Tapestry."

"What kind of tapestry?"

"Tapestry, shmapestry, what the hell do I care? The guy tells me it's worth two million to him, on the line, no questions, and that I can earn a half million if I pull it off, and there's nothing really I got to do. He lays down fifty G's, so help me, like it's toilet paper, and he says I'm a big operator and that's a retaining fee for my trouble, win, lose or draw. I put his money in a drawer and I tell him I'm retained and I give him a drink."

"What for? I don't mean the drink. I mean retained what for?"

"For turning up this tapestry stuff. He tells me the rest of it. He tells me that official channels have been exhausted. This tapestry promotion was big junk. French coppers and American coppers and F.B.I. had played around with it, but it was cold squab right now, the thing was four, five years old. So this syndicate and the French government had commissioned him to go after it. From underneath rather than on top, with plenty shmeario. He had traced the stuff to Argentina. Then he found out that the stuff had been brought up here by private plane, and sold to one guy and then to another guy, and that was all he knew."

I reached for my cup and I sipped cold scum-topped coffee. I put it down. I made it hiss with the throw-away stub of my cigarette.

"Then what?" I said.

"Then nothing. He hits this town with two names that maybe can help him. Me and the Little Guy. He inquires around. He gets bad reports on the Little Guy and I shack up AAA. He says. He goes up and he sizes him. Then he sizes me. I'm his boy."

"That's his story."

"That's right."

"To me," I said, "it sounds like cheeseburger."

"To you," he said, "I don't care what it sounds like."

"So what did you have to do?"

"Nothing. Just drop the word around. All kinds of people hit my joints. Just drop the word around. And mention the figures. The Frenchman told me that no figure near that could be realized in private sale. The stuff was priceless stuff. If you know what I mean. Museum stuff. It was worth all of that to be restored to his government, but privately nothing near that could be had. Which was why the fee to the agent, me, was so big. To keep me honest. It wouldn't pay for me to jerk it around. I'd earn more turning it over to him than trying to fiddle with it."

"More and more it shapes up cheeseburger."

"Look. Get that out of your head. It shaped up all right."

"What happened?"

"I spread the word. Here and there, around the tables. Discreetly. Sure enough, after a while, I get a buzz on it."

"A buzz," I said.

"From my manager in L.A. Ralph March wanted to see me."

"I know Ralph March. Ralph March is an art critic."

He hushed at me with quick-waving impatient hands. "Charlie Batesem and I went out there. Ralph March talked with me. Ralph is a friend of mine. On the side, he designs night clubs and things. He did my joint in Los Angeles. Ralph tells me a guy is very much interested in me. He tells me a guy wants to know all about me. Ralph gives me a send-off and the guy says will Ralph get in touch with me because the guy wants to see me and it's important."

"Who's the guy?"

"Algernon Hale."

"Algernon Hale," I said. "The Algernon

Hale Galleries. Big enough. Maybe the biggest. It's like with your Little Guy, I never saw the gentleman, but I heard about him."

"You saw *this* guy. You saw him down at the end of the table in my drawing room."

"Algernon Hale," I said. "We have got trouble."

He leaned back and rubbed his forehead and he pinched his nose. He patted himself for a cigar and found one and peeled off the point and stuck it into his mouth and rolled it around. I lit it for him, but he chewed it and it went out and he let it hang.

"It's been a rough night," he said. "One goddam *hell* of a rough night."

He shifted into a wedged-in corner of the booth and he sat there in a tired heap like a dropped raincoat.

I lit the cigar for him again. "What happened in Los Angeles?"

"Yeah. It took a little time till Ralph got the meeting arranged. Then Ralph went away and this guy got to the point."

"Tapestries, I take it. The point."

"He said that he'd heard that I was interested in certain tapestries which had come to this country via Argentina. You know me. I gave him the story bang bang period. I even told him what was in it for me and why. He asked me whether I'd know them if I saw them. I told him that I knew how to make money running gambling casinos and that I wouldn't know a good tapestry from a lousy crayon drawing. I asked him would he like to meet Pierre the Frenchman, and if he could produce the goods I would see to it that he was paid."

"Did he have them himself?"

"I'm sure of that. But I didn't ask him and I didn't care."

"Algernon Hale," I said. "Was Algernon Hale willing to do business with John J. O'Shea, commonly known as Viggy?"

He took the cigar out of his mouth and, absently, he watched the shadow of smoke crawl on Lindy's wall. Then he hammered the lit end hard against an ash tray, bangingly, till it came apart like a spitchcock. Then he threw it away.

"He asked me how he knew he'd be protected, that nothing would be pulled on him. If he produced."

"Naturally."

"I told him to check on me, anywhere anybody knew me. I told him I had my quirks, but that I did business straightaway and that I had a fine lot of gun-boys on my pay roll for just that purpose, and that if anyone tried to pull anything they'd wind up with a fast hole in the head, and wouldn't that be silly because everybody could be perfectly happy if everybody played straight poker."

"Did you also impress that on your Frenchman?"

Viggy came out of his corner and he leaned across the table and he bobbed a finger at me. "But good. I told him what a dope he'd be if he ever yelled copper at what he thought would be the right moment. I told him he'd never get out of the country except in a wooden box. I wasn't too worried about the Frenchman. I'm an old hand. He wouldn't yell copper. If he pulled anything, he'd pull something slick that couldn't be pinned on him. Also, I checked his credentials. That way, he was one hundred per cent."

The waiter brought another pot of coffee, unasked. He also brought a check. Viggy paid him, tip and all.

"All right. Finish it off," I said.

"He contacted me ten days later."

"The deal was on."

"On. He talked to people about me. He also talked to his lawyers. He also talked to the Pinkertons."

"All right. All right. Jesus."

"So now he trusted me. He trusted me so much, he offered me a cut from his side after the pay-off. I turned it down."

"Yeah," I said. "You turned it down."

He smiled, strictly dental. "I didn't want to turn it down. I like a buck. But I turned this buck down—and with a speech. Now the guy loved me. I didn't want to turn it down, but this was Algernon Hale, sprinkled with larceny, but a straight guy, and this wasn't the private deal he'd been waiting for with maybe an adventurous lover of the arts with a monocle."

"Fine, fine," I said. "So?"

"So this was a big dough deal and he was heated up and nervous about Underworld with purple pants and a capital U and how he could get his head handed to him instead of two million simoleons. I know those kind of guys. He itched for the dough and he'd go through with the deal, but he could be scared off, and I'm a smart businessman when I smell a buck, especially when I smell a half a million bucks. He needed reassurance, and more reassurance. I gave him reassurance. And more reassurance. That way. Honest Vig, the kid."

"For Chrissake—so?"

"Nothing. I wired the Frenchman. I got my big Gladstone bag and we packed the tapestries, there were twelve of them, and we came along to New York by train."

"When did you get in?"

"Ten-thirty."

"Where'd you go?"

"Directly home."

"Then?"

"I called up the Frog and he came over to see it and the stuff was the goods."

"Then what?"

"We made a date for ten o'clock in the morning at the Chase National on Madison Avenue and Forty-fifth Street. We were going to close the deal there at the bank."

"What about the tapestries?"

"Tapestries and all. That Frenchman is no dope. He was going to put the stuff in the hands of the bank people and ship from there."

"And the pay-off?"

"Right there too. Arrangements were to be made for the transfer of two million dollars to Hale's bank."

"Whoa," I said. "Hold it a minute. What about records and income tax and that sort of thing?"

Viggy jumped his shoulders around. "It was going through as a legitimate deal. Hale buys them from a guy, pays plenty, Pierre Vyseuseau discovers that Hale has them and he buys them, gladly. It's either a sale or a reward. Hale's lawyers fixed up some papers for Vyseuseau to sign."

"How about you?"

"I get mine in cash. I have Charlie and a couple of the boys with me."

I tapped a finger on the table. "All right. That finishes the conference. Then what?"

"We shook hands all around. Vyseuseau blew. Charlie and Hale were staying over at my place. I was going to put through a call for a few more of my grunt-boys to sit around with Charlie and the bag all night. I took the bag upstairs. You know the rest of it."

I leaned back and I looked at him. Wiselike.

"It's fantastic."

"Why?"

"It's just fantastic."

"Why? Because it's a big deal? I've been in bigger deals. That's the way it is with under-the-table deals. They're always big deals."

I slapped around for cigarettes. "Bill of particulars. Let's get arranged. What's first? You want me to find that valise for you?"

He moved his eyebrows up to the top of his forehead, one higher than the other, and he hooked them together with a raveled wrinkle.

"No. It's my hunch the Little Guy has got a thumb in that. Temporarily, I'll handle that."

I poured coffee from the pot. The coffee was cold again. I pushed it away. I lit a cigarette. My tongue burned. Vitamin B complex, I'd heard, was good for that. Vitamin B complex was good for everything. Why wasn't I a nice clean Vitamin B complex executive instead of a nut sitting around on his aching back at half past four in the morning listening to fairy tales? (Here I go.) How the hell did I ever get into this smell-bad business and why do I stay in it? Only that stiff scramble in the back seat of a car out there in the rain near the river was no fairy tale. Excuse me, dear Viggy my client, I go into this kind of idiot reverie, regularly, when I don't sleep enough.

I bounced around on the bench on my side of the booth, and I went back to work. "All right," I said. "I'm hired strictly to investigate murder and not robbery. And I am to try to break it, before it breaks all over you."

"That's what you're hired for."

"I've got to hit the Little Guy and I've got to hit Vyseuseau. I can't get to the Little Guy by the front door. So I'll push his back door in. Who's his girl?"

"I don't know."

"He's got a girl?"

"Sure he's got a girl. He's got a girl he's crazy about. He's got her sort of hid out. He's shy, that midget, and he likes them tall."

"Is Crying-towel Reed still his number-one boy?"

"Crying-towel Reed is now a free lance."

"Good enough. Vyseuseau is first. Tomorrow morning. Today, technically."

"No," Viggy said.

"What?"

"Now. Right away."

"*What?*"

"I called him before I came here. He'll be waiting for you. You're seeing him as my representative. I didn't tell him anything else. You're to postpone the deal in the bank and you're handling that whole end of it, any way you think best."

"Did you tell him my name?"

"Nothing. My representative."

"I'm Barry Drumgoole."

"Who?"

"Barry Drumgoole."

"Why?"

"Because I don't want to be Peter Chambers. I don't know who the guy is chummy with here in New York. I think I'd rather be Barry Drumgoole. For a while. For fun."

"So you're Barry Drumgoole. For fun. That's your department."

I squeezed out of the booth and I unpasted my pants from where I sit and I shook hands with him.

His palm was cold-wet like a subway wall.

Chapter V

Rain seltzered the side walk.

No cab.

I waited for a bus on Fiftieth Street and then I started walking and I walked all the way across to Park Avenue and no bus caught up with me.

I thought about pneumonia. Then I thought about Charlie Batesem and Algernon Hale and the pop-eyed woman, dead and naked, and rain splattering the windshield of an anonymous automobile. Then I thought about the unfunny joke on the guy that owned the automobile.

Then I rode up and rubbed knuckles on the door of 1212.

"Who?" somebody said.

"Mr. O'Shea's representative."

"Ah ha," he said pleasantly enough. "But yes."

He opened the door. He wore a tight-belted black silk lounging coat and black silk lounging pants and a white glistening cascade of silk neckerchief, puffed up and out and tucked beneath the shiny lapels of the coat. But distinguished.

"Ah," he said, and he clicked his heels, soft-shoe, the best he could manage in house slippers. "Ah."

"Ah," I said.

"Come in. Do come in."

"Thank you."

I came in.

I took off the gabardine hat and rain ran down my face. I took off my raincoat and he took the hat and coat and watched me squeeze rain out of my jacket.

He was a small, bouncy, peppery man—Worcestershire sauce in a trig white Van Dyke—with soft rambling hair on his head.

He had a thin straight correct nose and a high pale forehead and small sharp blue eyes that darted about like badminton birds. He had an upper plate of false teeth, large and slate-grey, the kind that European dentists seem to specialize in: when you smile, you look like a horse.

He smiled and he looked like a horse. "The name," he said, "is Pierre Vyseuseau."

He bowed, somewhat.

"The name," I said, "is Barry Drumgoole," and I bowed, somewhat, and the feet in my shoes made a soggy squashy sound and wet underwear got caught in all of the cracks of me. Raincoats are like harlots. They are wonderfully attractive to look forward to when it looks like rain but when the rain comes, you are disappointed. The prettier they are the more you are disappointed. And the big stiff sturdy ones, like what the traffic cops use—they just aren't pretty enough.

"This will not do," he said. "This will not ever do. Simply, Mr. Drumgoole, you must change."

"Simply," I said, "you're damn right. That's mostly what I've been doing all of this crazy night. Changing up clothes."

"Veritably?" he murmured.

He led me to a little foyer and he pointed at a bathroom with a shy just-in-case look on his face and then he led me through the little foyer and put the light on in a bedroom. He brought out a silk lounging robe and a pair of slippers and he said, "The slippers, undoubtedly, will be too small, but please try," and he went back to the living room.

I dropped my clothes in a wet pile on the rug and I got a towel from the bathroom and rubbed myself and then I put on the lounging robe and it came down to upwards of my knees and it fit me around the shoulders like Tarzan in a chemise, but I didn't care. It was beautifully hotel-warm in the apartment and I was anxious to get at this Vyseuseau. I looked at my big feet and I looked at the little house slippers, and I stepped over them.

I pattered back into the carpeted living room, and he smiled and bowed again. "The name," he said . . .

"I know. Vyseuseau."

"Please sit down."

I sat and slung my bare legs over the side of a wide soft armchair, and he went to a hard small chair next to a hard small writing desk and sat and tapped the tip of a high-manicured finger on the turned-down ledge of the desk.

"I had been asleep," he said. "Mr. O'Shea said it was of considerable importance."

"Yes," I said.

"First, if you please, may I inquire—who are you?"

"Certainly. Now I am Mr. O'Shea's personal representative. Generally, I am a private detective."

His eyebrows came together and then spread out, and an amused corner of his mouth tightened into a smile-grimace. He fiddled with the point of his beard.

"Ah," he said. "Wonderful. Exquisite. Regard, if you please. We, in my country, know full well of the American private detective, and with respect. We hold the wife both in esteem and in awe. Pray, if you please, the wife?"

He looked at me, looked at both sides of me, looked through me.

"*Wh-a-a-a-t?*" I said.

"The wife. In my country, we associate the American private detective with a wife, a blonde and beautiful and lengthy-limbed wife, who flits about, fetchingly and disarmingly and dangerously, and who is rescued by the husband, several times, and so the case is solved."

A cute little Frenchman with innocent little eyes and a nice white beard and horse's teeth that clicked like a lady's heels on a parquet floor and a sly, sardonic, superior tone of voice, mostly nasal.

"No wife," I said.

"No wife?"

"How long since you've been in your country?"

"Several years."

"They have added a record to that album. Now there's an American private detective who has no wife, nor sleep, nor food, nor rest. He drinks, drinks more, and more; flirts with women, blondes mostly, who talk hard but act soft, then he drinks more, then, somewhere in the middle, he gets dreadfully beaten about, then he drinks more, then he says a few dirty words, then he stumbles around, punch-drunk-like, but he is very smart and he adds up a lot of two's and two's, and then the case gets solved. See what I mean?"

"No."

"Skip it. Mr. O'Shea asked me to inform you that the transaction is to be postponed. The meeting at the bank at ten o'clock is canceled."

"Please?" he said.

"Canceled."

"Why?"

"Mr. Algernon Hale. He is dead." (That's what happens when you talk to a Frenchman. You begin to talk like a Frenchman. You know?)

"Ah," he said softly, with a finger in his beard. "Ah."

I shoved, automatically, into the pockets of the lounging robe, for cigarettes. Mr. Vyseuseau bounced up like a blown feather and he offered a leather cigarette box and he bowed and he lifted the lid and he said, "Please." The cigarettes were king-size with gold tips and they tasted as if they were filled with toasted guano embroiled with perfume. I took two drags and I got up, stumblingly, looking for an ash tray. I found one and I dumped the cigarette.

"The drink," he said, suddenly and animatedly. "One thousand pardons. But, yes. The drink. No?"

"Yes," I said, hurriedly, and I went back to my armchair. "In the grand tradition of the new record in the album. But yes."

"Excellent," he said and he displayed the teeth. "Exquisite. I love you very much."

He opened the door of a third room and he closed it behind him.

I got up and I stood in the center of the carpet with my hands on my hips and I surveyed the room, coolly and professionally and with detachment, like a real good detective, and I saw a big, well-outfitted, impersonal room, and nothing else, and I thought about dabbling with the pigeonholes of the writing desk, and I thought about how ridiculous that would be; then I went back to my chair and tossed my legs over the side and wrapped the bottom of the lounging robe around my thighs.

Pierre Vyseuseau presented himself with a bottle and two water glasses.

He said, "Cognac."

I said, "Swell."

I stood up and he filled each glass a quarter full and we clinked and drank, then he took my glass and filled it halfway and added a drop to his and he sat down and I sat down.

I put my nose into the glass and I let the bouquet bounce around. I said, "You didn't seem surprised."

"At which?"

"About Algernon Hale."

"Oh," he said. "Did I not?"

"Nor particularly affected."

"Mr. Drumgoole, I am not a young man. I have seen and experienced much of violence. The murder of Mr. Hale is of no disturbance to me. I saw the man once in my life. It is regrettable. But I have no interest in that. I have interest in tapestries."

"Temporarily," I said, "the deal is off."

"Ah, la. But . . ."

"Mr. O'Shea, or myself, we'll be in touch with you. Now, if you please, what is this all about? What's with tapestries?"

"Why not?" he said. He finished his drink and set the glass down alongside the bottle on the desk. "With tapestries, it is this. You recall the war?"

I sipped.

I said, "I recall the war. I have a mark on me that helps me recall it. When I sit too long in a hard chair, I hurt. I was wounded in the buttocks in the Battle of the Bulge. It sounds silly, but that's the way it is."

"Not silly. Very interesting. Tell me . . ."

"Ancient history," I said. "You tell me. About tapestries."

"La. These Americans."

"Look," I said. I pointed at the windows.

The dimness of dawn had begun. The rain had stopped.

"Tell me about tapestries," I said. "I would like to go home."

He straightened in his chair and he intertwined his fingers in his lap. "Do you know about tapestries? Anything?"

"No."

"All right. There are tapestries and there are tapestries. There are tapestries of the time of Thutmosis at Thebes in about the year fourteen hundred bee cee. There are tapestries, such as woven at Brussels for the Emperor Charles Five in the commemoration of victory in Tunis, which took of years and years and years to produce, with gold and silk thread provided by the Emperor himself, done with such delicate care and attention, that, simply to sponsor the preparation, an emissary of the Emperor spent more than two years in Granada in supervision of the preparatory silk to be used. There are tapestries designed by Raphael, Rubens, Hennequin de Bruges, Boucher—the greatest. There are tapestries that are sole, unique, unmatched and priceless, steeped in historical heritage . . ."

"Cut," I said. "There are tapestries of such extraordinary special value that twelve of them are worth two and a half million dollars to your people. So?"

"So, during the war there was looting. The Louvre, the museums, public holdings—many we hid, with success, and many were discovered. Much of the looted property has been recovered. Much has not been."

"So let's get down to cases."

"To cases—this group was the man Himmler's. In his name, by devious methods, great looting was accomplished. Specialists were assigned to sort and evaluate. It is of no matter. Suffice it to say—twelve priceless irreplaceable tapestries were dispatched to the Argentine by submarine, part of the personal backlog against a rainy day. Himmler's agent with them. Upon the death of Himmler, this agent took over ownership and transferred them to this country by airplane where he effected a sale for a comparative paucity. The agent has been apprehended. He had sold them to an elderly American, who is now dead of heart failure. From his family, I learned that this man had sold them, also; but how, to whom—no trace. Then your Mr. O'Shea was engaged, Algernon Hale was discovered—and now you tell me that the transaction is in abeyance."

"Temporarily," I said. "I hope."

"Is that all?"

He stood up.

"About the dough?" I said. "Who's paying all that dough?"

"Ah. There are great and many men of riches throughout the world. A syndicate was commenced—charitable contributions—rich men in Switzerland, England, India, America, even my own country; for the discovery and replacement of objects of art, looted during the war; under the sponsorship of my government. Voilà, and so. Thus the 'dough' in this matter of importance."

I drank cognac like beer, down to the bottom of the glass, and then I said, "Please, I should like to use your bathroom," and I got up and gave him the glass.

"Please?"

"Lavatory. Toilet."

"But of course."

"You will excuse me. I might be a little while. I have got to be sick. To the stomach."

"But of course, of course. And certainly."

I made a large fuss about joggling the lock on the door, but I didn't lock it. I flushed the bowl, roaringly. I pulled the shower curtains and turned on the shower, then I went back to the door and put my ear flat against the thin wood and listened, and sure enough, I heard him shuffle lightly through the little foyer.

When I said, "Ahem," courteously and continentally, from the doorway to the bedroom, he tried to drop my pants back to the floor, but his hand stuck in the pocket like the little boy with his wrist marooned in the cookie jar.

"Ahem," I said, again.

I got bright-eyed blinking silence: Vyseuseau with one horizontal arm, like an amputated scarecrow.

I went up to him and spread my bare feet and reached out and took hold of the kerchief around his neck, and I brought him up to me, a few inches off the floor.

"How did you know," I said, "that Algernon Hale was murdered?"

He kept shaking his hand. He finally got rid of my pants.

He gurgled like a water cooler. "What? Pardon?"

"Murdered. Algernon Hale. How did *you* know?"

"You told me."

"That's a lie."

"You told me."

"I did not tell you." I shook him, still dangling. "How did you know?"

"I assumed, in the circumstances . . ."

His face, very near me, was red-blotched and loosely knotted in small lumps like grated cheese in thick hot soup.

"You assumed, too, in the circumstances, that I was the kind of a guy whose clothes needed a fast frisk. Look, brother Vyseuseau . . ."

Then a round cold point sneaked in through my borrowed lounging robe and nudged at my stomach. I sighed. I let him down, but I held him close.

"First today," I murmured, grievously. "*A vôtre santé.*"

"*What?*"

He smiled a quiet little smile. "It is out of my boyhood. A reflex. My father, when he would partake of stimulus, frequently would speak the words like 'First today,' and the family would utter, in unison, '*A vôtre santé.*'"

"Touching," I said. "I am not referring to stimulus. I am referring to pistol in the midsection."

I let go the kerchief and I turned my back on him and I dropped the robe and started getting into my damp and wrinkled possessions.

"An impetuous young man," he said.

"You knew about Hale, Mr. Whiskers. You really ought to tell me. I might help you hurdle a large hunk of trouble." That one was older than that Thutmosis at Thebes with the tapestries, but what did I have to lose?

"I repeat. I believed you had told me. Perhaps I am mistaken. Perhaps I assumed it from the manner in which you mentioned of his death. It is a fact, then? He was murdered?"

"I'll play," I said. "He was murdered. Stabbed. Plus some advice. If you're smart, and I think you're smart, you never heard of Algernon Hale. From now on. Also, I am still a private detective. So if you would like to make a speech, now, about a guy that used to be Algernon Hale, I might go out and find you a parcel of extenuating circumstances."

I still had nothing to lose: shooting blanks at no target.

"So," he said, musingly, but with finality.

I was dressed.

He looked at me, looked at the little gun in his hand and slid it into the copious pocket of his lounging coat. I followed him into the living room. He gave me my raincoat and my hat.

We shook hands.

"I'll be seeing you," I said.

"But of course. *Au revoir*, Mr. Drumgoole. You will be in touch? I am anxious about the tapestries."

To me, it didn't sound like he meant it.

Chapter VI

I went home and I had a hot shower. No soap: a hot half-power lingering shower: a stand-still shower with my head hanging like a mule with the feed-bag on. Then I thought about the luxury of a tub. Undried, I switched to the cold smooth porcelain of the tub and I let the water run, very warm, and it filled gradually and caressingly. A hot dreamy soaking tub: soap and suds and pine oil and bath salts. The works. A hot tub, up to the neck, with your feet stuck over the far rim—that is no time for the phone to ring.

I let it ring.

That bothered me.

Surf should break and wind should howl and dogs should bark and people should marry. And so forth.

There's a pattern.

There's a start and there's a finish.

There's a cause and there's a result.

See what I mean? The hell with it.

A ringing phone should damn well be answered. Always.

The phone stopped ringing.

Peace went out of the bathroom.

I got out and rubbed down with a thick towel. I put on a terry-cloth robe and felt slippers and I went to the kitchen and set coffee to perking and did me a bachelor's delight: three eggs in a buttered pan, harden slightly, deviled ham on one side with American cheese on top of that, fold, increase heat, shake around a little and serve. Eat with a buttered biscuit and coffee and wash the dishes and you're ready for bed.

I ate and I washed the dishes and I was ready for bed.

So the phone rang again.

"Please God," I said out loud. "Pretty please. I should like to go to sleep."

I went to the living room and picked up the receiver.

"Jesus breezes," the voice said.

"Madeline Howell."

"Supersleuth."

"Nuts. You're busy at your typewriter and you've got an item and you're calling me to check on it."

"Nuts. The supersleuth stinks."

Madeline Howell was a lady-winchell on a New York paper. She worked nights and slept days. I'm supposed to work days and sleep nights. It gets mixed up.

"Jesus breezes," she said. "I've been calling you all night. I have a case for you."

"Thanks. Later on. Late in the afternoon. I just got in. I'm going to bed."

"It's very important."

"So's sleeping."

"Listen a minute. You'll be doing me a favor. It's about a suitcase that was swiped."

I yawned. I said, "It's an epidemic. Or a trend. Or a fellow with a satchel fetish."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"A big Gladstone. With initials. J.J.O'S."

Pause. For a nugatory scratch of the head. Then—"*What?*"

"A big Gladstone. With initials . . ."

"I'll be right over," I said. "Twenty minutes."

"You're a darling. Know where I live?"

"Sure. The Astor."

"No. I moved a couple of months ago. Thirteen Gracie Square. 3B."

"Swell."

"Thanks. Awfully."

So, I had another large hooker of rye and I got dressed. Again.

2

I rang a bell in Gracie Square and the door clicked and I walked up red-carpeted steps with ivory bannisters and I knocked, gently, on 3B. She said, "That you, Peter?" and I said, "Me, Peter," and she opened the door.

Shoulders and points and small curves (knowingly arrayed) nestled in navy blue chiffon with an ambassador sash of white from shoulder diagonally to hip, and a wide white belt. The dress stopped at nyloned knees and from there down she was exquisite.

On top, it wasn't half bad.

We smelled alike, with a difference. I smelled slightly of whiskey, and she smelled slightly of whiskey and slightly of eau de cologne.

She said, "You're a big sweet darling," and she bowed, a little one, and drew her hand back, sweepingly, behind her hip. I came in and closed the door and she reached up and put her arms around me and she kissed me wet and hard.

She let go. "Whew," she said.

"Whew," I said.

"A whit whiskified," she said.

"Oh, but nary. Nor you."

"Me? Tight, I'd say. I flit from booby-trap to *boîte*, and back. My life work, and I've been making with the life work all night. With time out to call you."

"Me?" I said. "High. I've been working all night too."

"Tight and high." She giggled. "Like turtle-neck sweaters. All right, take off your coat and sit down."

I took off my hat and coat and put them over one of the grill gates of the step-down living room. Orange sun in slatted spaces put stripes on the walls through the venetian blinds. I looked at my watch. It was six-twenty. I sat down in a sky-blue armchair while she fixed the blinds so that the sun stayed out and light came in. I sat in front of a fake fireplace and I stared into fake flames that flamed because of hidden batches of red Mazda bulbs playing merry-go-round inside a rotating device. Strangely, it was warm and comfortable and restful. Tight and high, and how. And tired.

She came back and sat down opposite and swished her knees crossed and smiled at me.

She was a diminutive blonde, slender as a swizzle stick, shaped up right in all the places, with round clear large blue eyes and wicked eyebrows and a slow smile that was disarming and disruptive, and corruptive. She had a reputation around the town. She was a killer-diller with the boys, but she bored easily and quickly and she lost interest at the height of the frolic, which made for broken glass in night clubs and overturned tables and tuxedoed heroes and hush-hush and bribes and squelched press releases.

When she looked at you, like she was looking at me, upward, and she curved her lips at you and her dimples shimmered; when she smiled, as she was smiling now, slowly and carefully, like you were being exposed to X-ray; you were supposed to start thumping inside; and keep thumping.

I didn't thump. I like them more corporeal, larger and less studied.

However . . .

"This business," she said, "about the suitcase. It was stolen at about eleven o'clock last evening on Seventy-sixth near Park, during the rain. A man was carrying it. He was mugged, rendered unconscious and robbed. Of the valise." Her voice was grey velvet in the gloom-glow of candles. That, she had.

"Mugged, rendered unconscious and robbed," I said. "My, my. Just like in the papers." I pushed a cigarette at her, reached over and lit it and lit my own. Gruffly I said, with the cigarette jumping in my lips: "Man's name?"

That was all I wanted out of this interview.

"I don't know," she said. And blithely.

I blew smoke out of my lungs, wearily. I lost the cigarette in an ash tray. I said, "You claim you want me to handle a case. You claim you've been calling me all night. Now you want to play gidgee."

"No," she said. "I really don't know who the man was."

"What was in the bag?"

"I don't know that either."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I want you to find the bag."

"Why?"

"That's not your business."

"For how much?"

"For a thousand dollars."

"What else you got for me?"

"Nothing else."

"Now, look," I said, "angel-face. Do you really think I can find a suitcase in this city of seven million on the facts that you've given me? A man got hit on the head on Seventy-sixth Street and lost a bag. Nothing else. Do you?"

She smiled with her eyes. Unenthusiastically. "I don't know. I hope so. You're supposed to be good. Give it a whirl. I pay you a thousand dollars regardless. Now."

"I don't get it," I said.

She stood up and went out of the room.

I sat still and I pondered.

What the hell was playing here?

Was this tied in? Of course it was. But Madeline Howell. Not Madeline Howell. I knew Madeline Howell. Madeline Howell was virtue in a black lace nightgown: respectability dented around the edges by big city wise-guyness—sleeping around, maybe, but essentially moral. Madeline Howell fronting for thieves was as likely as the town banker reaching around to snitch a nickel from the poor-box.

Not good. Shift. New subject.

What about ethics?

Would I be working at cross-purposes on behalf of two clients with divergent interests? If I took her money, would I be waving off Viggy? No. According to Viggy I was not supposed to be looking for the bag. Viggy was paying me to try to clear up that mess of murder in his house. So all right. So I had thought about ethics.

So now I was working for Madeline too. Somewhere, I'd ring Viggy in on it. After all...

Now, what about her?

Who in all bad hell ever heard of a detective being paid one thousand dollars to find a bag without any information except that it was a bag and that it was stolen by the unique method of clipping a guy over the head and taking it away.

All right, again; will somebody, somewhere, please understand how private detective and alcoholic get to sound so similar.

She came back with a packet of fresh unbent bills (ten one-hundreds) and she pinched my cheek, gently, like you'd squeeze an eye-dropper, and she slapped the money into my nonprotesting hand. "I've hired me a detective. May I build you a drink?"

"No."

In a far corner of the room, she opened a tall wooden cabinet. "What kind of a drink don't you want? Scotch or rye?"

"Rye," I said automatically, perfunctorily, sourly.

It was an immense room with a bordello-red carpet and casement windows and yellow drapes and blue easy chairs and a million thingamabobs: like giraffes with their necks entwined on a corner bookcase, and a fragile glass boat on a coffee table, and miniature dolls on shelves in the walls, and little statuettes on mahogany tables, and a sad little dog with his leg poised at a little red hydrant on top of the fireplace.

The biggest object in the room was a low day bed running the length of the wall between the casement windows; sheathed in light blue satin with plump blue satin pillows. Over the day bed, between the windows, there was (from the angle in which I was sitting) a blob of large stucco-rough indeterminate oil painting.

In the rear, all the way back, a twisting staircase with a metal-railed bannister went up and into a round hole in the ceiling.

"Jesus breezes," Madeline Howell said. "Move. Come and get it."

She put the amber glass of fizz on a wicker coaster on top of the high mahogany liquor cabinet. I sighed with my lips closed, gratingly, and creased the money and put it away.

I should have liked to have stretched my legs all the way and to have laid my head on the soft back of the soft chair and to have closed my eyes and to have thought no thoughts; except that the picture of Charlie Batesem came to me, suddenly, with the white bone of his neck exposed: and then I thought about the sweet-cold morning wind whipping around a motionless automobile near the North River, and about the city that was stirring, and about sleepy people having normal morning coffee, and about a good family-man clerk, breathing deep of the clean air near the river on his way to work at the pier off Fifty-seventh Street, sounding his heels on the sidewalk and remembering the pressure of his little girl's good-by hug and then, in curiosity, peering into a car parked in the gutter . . .

I got up and I headed for the drink on the cabinet.

Madeline brushed by me and I stopped and watched her arrange herself amongst the pillows on the day bed. She had a lot of leg, narrow at the ankle and curving at the calf, and, with the highball in one hand and the other hand back over her head, her stomach was round and flat and her breasts were high and full, and disconcerting.

"Charlie Batesem," I said at her.

"Boo," she said.

"Algernon Hale."

"Boo."

That was that.

Nothing.

She smiled at me and leaned on one elbow and sipped her drink. She giggled and her bosom deepened. "Breezes. Must you go completely detective on me, barking and waving your eyebrows? My goodness, all I want you to do is find a valise that strayed." She put the glass down on a little table. "Come on over here and relax. It's important that you find it, and it was important to me that you accept the damn case. Now you've got it. Fine. So relax, and then get out of here, and do your detecting during union hours, or something."

I turned and reached up for the drink, and I saw the photograph in the thick silver frame, right behind the highball.

I took the highball out of the way.

"Who's the boy friend?"

I knew who the boy friend was. The boy friend was Dennis Quentin O'Shea, handsome and smiling-eyed and curly-headed.

"Never saw the man in my life," she said. "Only the picture."

"Never saw the man in her life."

I read out loud from the lower right-hand corner: "To Mad, with love, Denny."

"Sweet, huh?"

"But you never saw the man in your life."

"Correct," she said, "and stop it. All I want you to do is to find a valise. Stop snooping around my apartment. Stop asking me questions that are none of your business. I said I never saw that man, and I meant it. Could be I keep that face up there to give my guys an inferiority complex when they come a-calling. Script and all. I don't know the man. Finish. Now come on over here and mind your business."

I started coming. I stopped. I stopped and I stared and I loved it. I half-closed my eyes and I sipped the drink and I stared at the oil painting that was no longer blob nor indeterminate. I stared at it and sipped my drink and stepped back a few paces and then forward and I opened my eyes and I tilted my head one way and then the other way, but I didn't stop staring—and the most beautiful girl I have ever seen stared back at me, impishly.

It was a face. No body. A face that came out of the smoky-yellow background of the canvas like steam out of a boiling kettle, hot and hissing and forceful and dangerous. A dark, angry face with color spread low in her cheeks and sulky red lips and a silken skin and wide black almond eyes, inscrutable.

I stared at her and she stared at me.

I thumped.

"Look, Vulnerable," Madeline Howell said. "Her name is Mona Crawford. My roommate, or apartment-mate." She pointed at the round-a-round stairway. "This is a duplex, which was too much for her. She rented the lower half to me. Comes from my home town in Montana. Very beautiful. Not the town. The dame. That's a self-portrait."

"An artist?" I queried.

"A dancer," she said.

I finished the highball. I put the glass down on the coffee table. Noisily. "Nothing makes sense around here. You want me to find a bag, but you don't know a thing about it and you won't even tell me why you want it found. I don't want a drink, so I just finished a rye highball. You sport a picture of a guy who inscribes 'To Mad, with love,' and you never saw the guy in your life. A girl does a marvelous painting in oil, so she's not an artist, she's a dancer. Nothing makes sense."

"Jesus breezes," she wailed. "This makes sense. You have your case and you've been paid your fee. Relax. Be human. Come on over here and kiss me. My goodness. It won't kill you."

It didn't kill me.

Chapter VII

I dozed in the cab from Gracie Square to Forty-ninth Street and Broadway, a short enough haul—then the driver reached in and tapped me. I paid, with a top-heavy fatigue-careless tip and the driver said, "Thank you," which helped wake me up. It was half past nine of a dull morning with timid sunshine diluting a smoke-thick sky.

I went into a clean-floored barbershop and I ignored the solicitous empty-chaired barbers. I took off my hat and coat and I sat down in a wire-framed chair and I waited for Tony, Tony with the shoeshine hair.

He saw me and he threw me a crescent-moon smile from the number-one chair and he waved a razor. I admired his teeth and his hair and his trim, white-dressed figure. I waited some more, and then I got into the number-one chair and I said, "A haircut, please."

Tony was an enterprising lad. Tony was boss barber, desultorily. Mostly he was a bookmaker with a thriving trade. He served also as a dispensary for marijuana, but you had to be introduced by a customer. From the smell of him, it occurred to me that the dispensary was beginning to smoke up profits. It is natural, I suppose, for a young fellow to want to discover what all the wild musicians are so crazy about. It is natural, too, to sink a little lower in the barber chair and to try not to worry overly about a pair of scissors chopping around your ears.

In my best barbershop manner (albeit a little strained) I said, "What's new with Crying-towel Reed? I haven't seen him around."

"Cry? He's in business. Got a poolroom on Twenty-sixth and Seventh."

"Well," I said. "A businessman."

"Yeah. You want tonic?"

"No. Dry."

He finished the haircut. I sighed.

He patted my hair. "Shave?"

"Not on your life," I said and I touched the poor tight skin at my throat, gently.

"No shave?"

"No shave," I said scramblingly. "I get a rash. I'm a tender one. Ha."

I showed him teeth and I paid.

2

The sign said BILLIARDS and you went up one dark flight of hollow wooden steps with metal nosings. You opened a tin-sheathed door and it slammed heavily behind you, and you were in a large, still, dim room: a converted loft with the street wall supplanted by three immense pivot windows painted light green, top to bottom.

You shook your head and you blinked your eyes and you waited to get used to it. The lighting was tricky. Frail sun filtered through the green translucence and a slanted veil of thin dust shimmered in front of you. It was cool and it was quiet.

It was like an aquarium. With pool tables.

Fourteen pool tables, along the middle, single file. Racks of cues in niches on the side walls and green cloth-topped card tables in the rear. In a corner, a big squat wooden icebox for the colas. In front of the green windows, a long rectangle of glass counter with cigarettes and cigars and packaged candies. In front of the counter, facing the door, with the tips of his elbows resting on the counter behind him, with one foot raised and the heel of the shoe hooked onto a low ledge: Crying-towel Reed.

"Hi," I said.

"Hi." His voice was the riffle of an old deck of cards, a slapping whisper.

Crying-towel Reed: a very naughty number.

Small and slender and round-shouldered; with a face that could blend with the blankness of a wall, a sand-colored face and no other color, shaped like an egg with the point on bottom; with short-clipped stand-up hair; with slash-pocket eyes, the grieving kind, brown and murky as a bad cup of coffee; with a small anemic fishmouth, sad and turned down at the corners, the outer lines parallel to the slash-pocket eyes. Crying-towel Reed: he looked like a frustrated poet with dyspepsia.

I hung my hat and coat on a hook in the wall. "How's about some kelly?" I said.

"No kelly."

"No kelly?"

"No kelly. I don't like kelly. Have a cola. On the boss."

"Who's boss?"

"Me."

He smiled, sorrowfully.

He took a cover off the icebox and he reached down and brought up two bottles. He flipped off the metal covers against the attached bottle-opener and he handed me a bottle. He brought his up to his mouth and he finished it without once taking it away from his lips, watching me all the time. I can't drink from a bottle. My tongue gets stuck. I did the best I could.

Crying-towel Reed: expensively encased in brown suede shoes and custom-made brown reverse pleat slacks and a golden wool sport shirt.

(Once upon a time, when Cry worked exclusively for the Little Guy, trouble developed with the slot machines. The cashboxes were sullied with a profusion of slugs. But regularly. So Crying-towel Reed was given the assignment and he had a peephole drilled in the wall and an eye applied to the peephole and soon enough it was discovered that a chef in the joint who cooked for the customers had found a system to beat the bandits. When business was dull, he shoved slugs into the machine until he hit, then he quit till business was dull again, then he tried the system on another machine. They laid him out on the floor of the kitchen and they held him down by the arms and they held him down by the legs, and Cry injected quarters, not slugs, into his throat, unclinkingly, until he died. Then Cry took him driving on a narrow Connecticut road and dumped him. They spread that story. No more slugs showed up in the Little Guy's slot machines.)

Crying-towel Reed: a pro, with more recipes for murder than a cookbook has for sauce.

I reminded him about the Little Guy's chef: I wanted him in a nice frame of mind.

"A legend," he said. "A foible."

"Fable," I said.

"Fable," he said. "A guy gives me that Fable up in Narragansett. I go for him three G's across, and the glue winds up in the sheisshouse. I am not lucky. Very unlucky. Like if I invested with an undertaker, the customers would stop dying. Good, huh?"

"How's about some kelly?" I said.

"No kelly. I am willing to joust around with you across the green, but not kelly. Chicago. Chicago, a cemetery with lights. Very funny. So I will play you Chicago, if you want some pool, a saw a way, six ways, double for roundhouse."

A saw is a sawbuck, a sawbuck is ten dollars, six ways double could be one hundred and twenty dollars and I cannot say I'm a cultivated pocket-pooler. Sighingly I said: "Grab a cue."

It is politic, when you are looking for information, to try to lose. At a saw a way, six ways, double for roundhouse, I did not try to lose. I tried to win.

I lost.

The first game, I lost a roundhouse. One hundred and twenty bucks. The next game, I had two ways, he had four. Twenty bucks, which was all right. The next game I lost a roundhouse and the next game I lost a roundhouse. The next game; I lost a roundhouse.

He hitched one side of his thin behind onto the rim of the pool table and he made a cane of his cue and he leaned on it. "All right," he said, "sucker. What gives?"

"What?"

"Look. I like a guy what pays for what he buys. So you're all paid up. Five C's. Now, what are you buying? You did not come here to play pool with Crying-towel Reed. Not you."

I put my cue on the table and I rolled it between my fingers. "Well," I said, "it's about a bet I made."

"A bet about what?"

"Who."

"*What?*"

"I mean it's a bet about a who; not a bet about a what."

"So it's a bet about a who. So what?"

I came around and I stood in front of him. "You know how it is, sometimes. You start talking with a guy about nothing and before you know it you're shooting your face off and you're steamed into making a bet. Needled. About nothing. The guy is a big operator, so he says I'll bet you a couple of thousand, and I can't be a piker, so I got a bet."

"About what? I mean who?"

"About the Little Guy."

He got off the pool table. He laid his cue-stick alongside mine. He went and sat on the icebox for the colas. He said, "Maybe we ought to not talk about it, huh."

"It's nothing," I said.

"Look. If it's nothing and I can help, I am glad to help. But it has got to be nothing."

"It's about if the Little Guy is a nancy."

Some of the stiffness went out of his face. "What?" he said.

"A fruit, a milky way, a buttercup; the Little Guy."

Now he laughed. "Heh, heh. All right. So it's about nothing. Which side you on?"

"I'm on the side that says he isn't."

"Then you win. That other guy is nuts. But nuts. The Little Guy is strictly for the dollies. The Little Guy a nance; you go collect your dough from the guy. And if he don't want to pay, that's a job for me, pal."

I shook my head. "You ought to be able to do better than that. For a pal."

"How?"

"You can give me something concrete."

"Concrete," he said, "you pour on a stiff so he makes a splash in the river."

"I mean a sure-pop something. Something specific. Like if he had a girl friend." (Subtle, that Chambers.)

"Specific," he said. "Yeah. Specific. Well, specific, he's got a dolly up there in Denny O'Shea's Utopia Ballroom, which is his apple-pie. But specific."

"A sweetheart?"

"What else is apple-pie, a mortal enema?"

"Enemy."

"Enemy, I mean."

"You don't make sense, pal."

"Don't get smart, sucker."

"Listen. If the Little Guy has a sweetheart, a real sweet sweetheart, it doesn't make sense that she works as a hostess in the Utopia." I smirked for him, real lecherous. I hoped. "Sweethearts don't work."

He considered that. He nudged a knuckle at a nostril, sniffed, got out a handkerchief and blew. "You're a big enough boy to know," he said, "that all dames is bats. Maybe that's the way this one wants it."

"Name?"

"What?"

"What's her name?"

"I don't know."

"You ever see her?"

"You bet. Out of this world. Tall, dark and gorgeous. Momma."

I totaled up what I owed him for the Chicago and I brought out my wallet and I gave him five of Madeline Howell's crisp one-hundred-dollar bills. He took them and slid them into his pants pocket and he wagged his head.

"I told you," he said, "because why shouldn't I? It's about nothing, and nobody never told me it's a secret. But, a little bit, if I was you, I would not mess with that tomato. Because, a little bit, that way, you would only be drumming up business for me, which would be oke by me on one side, but on the other side it would be just too bad because you are a nice young feller. Catch?"

"Catch," I said. I got my hat and I got my head into it. "But how come? You still work for him? What would you have to do with it?"

"Piecework, I would have to do with it. I am what you call an independent constructor, or contractor. Something. I am not on nobody's pay roll, if you know what I mean. I am Cry, the businessman. There is more in it that way."

I looked at the cool empty cavern of a poolroom. "*This* business doesn't look so good, for Cry the businessman. Don't you ever have customers?"

He scrubbed a hand over his burr-haircut. "I got a lousy reputation. And I close up suddenlike, all kinds of crazy hours, when I get a hurry-up phone call. No customers. Maybe, once in a while, a couple kids."

"I get it," I said. "So long and thanks."

"Thank *you*. For the donation, sucker. So long. Don't let them push you around. In a revolving door. Good, huh?"

It figured for no customers. A nice little man like Crying-towel Reed figured for no customers, no friends, no anybody. Not Crying-towel Reed: he figured to be a very lonesome little man.

Lonesome as an outhouse on a prairie.

Chapter VIII

I bought a newspaper and I flagged down a cab. I told him to take me to Rockefeller Plaza, where are the offices of Scoffol and Chambers. I looked through the newspaper for a story about three cadavers without clothes on a stationary joy ride in a parked car by the river. There was no story. I threw the newspaper out of the window, which is a crime in New York City. I thought, hungrily, about going to sleep.

Scoffol and Chambers.

I ducked beneath the scratchy august sniff of my estimable secretary, Miss Miranda Foxworth, and I went through and I knocked on Scoffol's door. Scoffol said, "Come in," and I went in and he looked up from his papers and he said, "The roving detective; you look like the wrath," and he went back to his papers.

I didn't take my hat or coat off. I moved in on a red leather easy chair and I stuffed my hands into my coat pockets and I closed my eyes.

Scoffol and Chambers: Scoffol is short and round and beet-faced with short-chopped white hair, parted down the middle; small legs, little feet, short back and short stomach, circular and comfortably nudging the vest buttons. I'm another kind of guy. I'm a long one with a clarkie mustache, six feet two, sort of rawboned with big shoulders (or I get a new tailor). Scoffol is the boulder; I am the phosphorescent glimmer. You can wipe the glimmer off the boulder. You cannot budge the boulder, not a real bouldery boulder. Not without a derrick.

We have a system in our business. We mind our own. Mostly, I handle the roughneck trade. Or, they handle me. Scoffol is in demand with the class; the insurance companies, the Wall Street outfits, the very rich ladies with the punk husbands who get drunk or get lost or join the long-legged blondes with very red lips and turned-up noses and rounded hips that they shake around in the floor shows and they think they are actresses. My bunch are more the grifters and the ginsels and the goniffs and the sharpshooters and the dollies and the mollies and the twists and the tomatoes. (If you are a client of mine—I don't mean you; I mean the other ones.)

I was dreaming, sort of, about a blonde with a boulder for a buttocks with phosphorescent glimmerings being chased around by a couple of insurance company vice-presidents, when Scoffol woke me. "You've been sleeping and groaning for half an hour. Maybe you have things to do, or maybe you ought to go home and sleep."

"Things to do," I said. "First thing, right from here, I've got to go over and pick up a seventy-five-hundred-dollar fee from Dennis O'Shea."

"Who is Dennis O'Shea?"

"Viggy O'Shea's brother."

"Who is Viggy O'Shea?"

"Viggy O'Shea, dear patrician, is one hell of a fine client. One of the best."

Scoffol pulled out a pipe and lit it and went back to his chair behind the desk and he said, "All right. Start telling me."

"How do you know, detective?"

"Because you're not coming into my room to sit in a red chair and sleep. You were trying to be polite, or hard to get."

I told him.

There was a lot of blue smoke in the room before he told me.

"Bango," he said. "Three characters defunct. Boom. Just like that. But three, no less."

"Yeah," I said.

"Impossible."

"Yeah," I said. "Impossible."

"And screamingly sensational. You haven't been chewing hashish?"

"Herring," I said. "Not hashish. I'm a herring hound. From smörgåsbord to Arnold Reuben—once a day every day—herring. What else?"

"Bizarre."

"Bizarre. Now you've got a good one. Good and bizarre, but also good and dead and clammy. Three of them, bang, just like that—but idiot imprecations don't alter the sensational, bizarre, impossible facts. So tear yourself away from the heavy-money investigatorial duties, and deliver yourself of a viewpoint."

He clicked the pipe on his teeth. "I'm sorry," he said and he smiled. "Spell Viggy O'Shea for me."

"Viggy O'Shea. Rich and handsome. He owns five of the Grade-A Number-One gambling casinos in choice spots throughout the country. I know him since he was a boy. He is my very best client. This is characteristic: every time there's the faintest rumble of trouble, he goes chasing around the town for me. And he's a big shot. The hot-shots know all about Viggy and his eternal chase of his gumshoe savior, and they laugh about it. But Viggy knows what he's doing. He's playing along with the percentages, which he's done all his life. He can't go to the cops, he can't afford to mix with the law except to pay it off not to bother his business—but there is always a section of the law, top or bottom, gunning for him, personally; so when there's trouble, right away, he goes out on the town looking for me; and I say he's right. I've steered him clear for years."

"And I hope he's been paying for it."

"Through the nose, and gladly. Check your books sometimes."

"What's the Viggy for? That can't be a name."

"No. His name is John James O'Shea. He's a graduate accountant that couldn't make a living at it. He went from dice boy in Florida, to croupier in Reno, to handicapper for Armstrong—and then when he'd saved a few, he opened his own little place. Viggy comes from vigorisch. Vigorisch is a gambler's term which means percentage. There's percentage in running an honest gambling establishment. When he started, he'd cut a piece of the game; and he himself didn't gamble. You can make a lot of money that way. He made it. Now he doesn't cut his games. He operates a new way. He caters only to the best. He charges one hundred dollars a smash, entrance fee. If you want food or drink, you pay like it was rubles. For that he supplies the equipment and the protection and the assurance that there is no cheating and there are no shills. He's got the best reputation around the country. An honest game comes high, and a gambler is damn willing to pay for that."

Scoffol knocked the stuffing out of his pipe and he got up and he came around and he stood in front of me. "Take off your hat and coat," he said. "My God."

I didn't move. I said, "Any suggestions?"

"Two. Number one: what about Viggy?"

"What *about* Viggy?"

"Is it conceivable that Viggy turned this trick and then hires you to figure out the cover-up?"

"Why?"

"So that he can have the full sale price for the tapestries, rather than only the agent's commission."

Moodily I said, "But it is already established that he couldn't get at a private sale what Vyseuseau would pay him as his commission."

"Correction," Scoffol said. "That isn't established. That is merely what Vyseuseau told him. Perhaps your Viggy found out different."

I let that rattle around in my head for a couple of minutes. Then I said, "No good. That way we could expect a dead Mr. Hale. We would not also have a dead Charlie Batesem, and a dead naked woman in bed."

Scoffol went back to the chair behind his desk. "All right, it was a thought. Suggestion two: what about Vyseuseau? His syndicate authorizes him to pay two million bucks to buy the stuff, plus a half million to an agent. A chap needn't have more than an iota of no-good to try to cut himself in on a slice of that."

"Yes." I nodded. "I like that much better."

"I like that much better too."

"It would explain why Vyseuseau knew that Algernon Hale was murdered. It might also explain the dead Charlie Batesem, since Charlie was bodyguarding the job. It would not explain our strange dead lady. But we can't expect to have everything explained, not just sitting around talking; a couple of bright detectives batting fungoes at each other."

"All right," Scoffol said. "Let's rule Viggy out and concentrate on Vyseuseau. Do you see that Little Guy mixed up in it? As I do?"

I was excited. "Exactly. You make the speech. If it jibes with the way I've been thinking all along, then I think we've got something."

"Sure. Here's the speech. Vyseuseau gets to the Little Guy with his idea of dropping the word around about the tapestries. The Little Guy hears him out and then he tells him that he's not the man for that. Why? Because the right kind of people do not patronize his type of establishment. They sit around. They chat around. They get acquainted. Perhaps they see each other a few times, and then Mister Little Guy comes up with a very good idea. Sure, use Viggy O'Shea. His clientele is correct for the dropping-of-the-word-around. And *five* gaming houses at strategic points throughout the country. But he tells him to keep in touch with him, the Little Guy. If the tapestries should turn up, then Vyseuseau is to get in touch with him, to tell him where and when, and he takes over thereafter. *With that setup, it explains how Vyseuseau knew Hale was murdered.* He had notified the Little Guy that the bag was delivered, and the Little Guy had taken over, in his own fashion. The further arrangements between Vyseuseau and the Little Guy would be simple. When the situation smooths over, a dummy turns up with the tapestries, Vyseuseau makes the purchase, and he and the Little Guy split the purchase price. A million dollars each. That, as David Dodge once said, ain't hay. Plus the agent's commission."

I got up and I reached over the desk and we shook hands. "Check. Perfect. I think we can use that as the basic premise. Something like that. Good-by, now."

"Good-by, and get some sleep. Come over to my hotel tonight and we'll kick it around some more. You still have your dead lady in bed; plus the complication of the interest evidenced by Madeline Howell."

"Those," I said, "will require good old stumble-around detection, rather than sharp-Scoffol deduction."

"Sharp-Scoffol, my eye. You had that figured. You just let me say it for corroboration. Come over tonight, anyway. We'll rehash it."

"Not tonight."

"What's tonight?"

"Tonight," I said, "I'm going dancing."

"Tonight, he says, he's going dancing." Pause. Double pause. "*Wh-a-a-t?*"

"Dancing."

"Dancing?"

"Dancing. You know, like a punch-drunk fighter with a hotfoot."

His eyebrows soared like fresh-flushed quail. I didn't wait for them to settle down.

2

Denny O'Shea's Utopia Ballroom wasn't Denny O'Shea's Utopia Ballroom although everybody called it Denny O'Shea's Utopia Ballroom; it was Sidney Klien's Utopia Ballroom, Denny O'Shea, manager. It was on the east side of Broadway in the Fifties; and when I got there in the middle of high noon on the Avenue, the steel doors were shut flat-tight with no handles.

An EGG CREAM neon on the corner was bright as a moron with migraine; in pallid competition with sunlight.

"You got your lights on," I said to the razor-nosed man behind the marble counter.

"Trouble with the juice. Like a egg-cream?"

"But certainly."

An egg-cream is a chocolate soda with a dash of milk that froths on top like it wants to be beer.

I wiped my lips. "The Utopia. How does one get into the business office of the Utopia?"

"Front door locked?"

"Yep."

"Round the corner, there's a skinny set of stairs. Says WATCHMAKER. That's the second floor. First floor's the office. Lookin' for Denny?"

"Yep."

"Denny's upstairs. Fed him a egg-cream before."

"Thanks."

I gave him six cents like the sign said. "Eight cents," he said. He shook his head, sadly. "It's the damned inflation."

3

I knocked on the door that proclaimed OFFICE UTOPIA in fire-exit red, and Denny's boom came back like an instant bellowing echo: "Who knocks?"

"Me. Pete Chambers."

"Stop being cute. Nobody knocks around here except process servers, and they shouldn't knock. You come in or you stay out. You don't knock."

Denny O'Shea, massive behind his massive desk, blonde-red hair jumping up from his forehead, going back in graceful waves; a shining man—hair, teeth, mouth; bright along with high cheekbones, blue-bright and challenging in the eyes, bright along the sardonic eyebrows; wriggles of laughter crinkles on top and hard smooth stubborn jaw on bottom. Dennis Quentin O'Shea: Viggy O'Shea's younger brother (about thirty-five). Viggy was tall, Denny was taller (Denny was six feet four); Viggy was dark, Denny was cream-skinned laughing blonde; Viggy was shrewd and serious, Denny was a gambling fool.

The brothers did resemble each other: Viggy loved the ladies. Denny loved the ladies.

"Sit down," he said, "I'll be with you in a few minutes," and he dove into sheets of typewritten figures, rustlingly.

I put my hat on a chair and I used my coat for a cover on Denny's office couch. "Wake me up," I said and I went to sleep.

The blonde of my dreams with the boulder for a buttocks was shaping into something very special, and the boulder had disappeared in favor of varied and sensational contours and I was chasing her myself around a parked car by the river front, when

I heard him:

"Okay. Okay. Jesuschrist. Okay."

"Take it easy," I said. "Work."

"How the hell can anybody work with you snoring like that. What do you want?"

I unfolded off the couch and I got out my wallet and I gave him Viggy's note. "That is what I want."

He read the note and he gave it back to me. He smiled like the little boy that has just burned his initials in the seat of his father's extra pair of trousers. "Suppose," he said, "I give you sixty-five hundred. I'm a little jammed. I'll give you the sixty-five, and suppose you drop around tomorrow or the next day for the other G. It'll be a favor."

"Why not?"

He fiddled with his safe and he counted out six thousand five hundred dollars and he gave it to me. "Don't mention it to Viggy. You know how it is. You'll have the balance in a day or two. Thanks for the favor."

"Not at all."

I cupped the light of a match around a cigarette and I said over the rim of my hands: "How's Mad?"

"Who?"

"Mad."

"Mad?"

"Madeline Howell."

Vaguely he said, "Madeline Howell?"

"Terrific. Over by Gracie Square."

"Madeline Howell," he said. "*Oh.* Oh, fine, fine. Swell."

If he knew Madeline Howell well enough to donate a "To Mad, with love" photograph—then I was a hare-lipped congressman with warts on his tongue to whom the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November was another day for bonfires.

Chapter IX

I went home and I went to sleep.

No dreams.

I slept like a guy on a two-day drunk (which, practically, it was); and I rasped back at the bronx-buzz of the electric alarm when it woke me at nine o'clock in the evening.

I didn't want to get up.

Numbly, I took a shower, and I put on a pair of my new beige boxer shorts and I admired myself in the mirror and I struck a few poses like Jack Dempsey and I sparred a few slight rounds with myself.

Then my case fell on me. I mean, I remembered.

I made a neat stack of sixty-five-hundred cash dollars and put them in an envelope and put that in a drawer beneath laundered shirts and I hoped, vaguely, there wouldn't be a fire.

I dressed very carefully in my best-shouldered drape: a dark blue pencil stripe with set-in sleeves and pegged pants. I was very careful about my spread-collar white shirt. I was very careful about my ribbed maroon socks. I was very careful about the knot in my dark red tie. I added a high spray of white handkerchief to the top pocket of my jacket, and I was dressed for the evening. No; I dabbed on a touch of that brawny pinesy perfume that's supposed to make you smell like October in the backwoods; and now I was dressed for the evening.

So I had some coffee and cereal in heavy cream and more coffee and I turned off the lights.

I live at Fifty-ninth Street and Sixth Avenue (Central Park South, when one is trying to impress a cookie, and the Avenue of the Americas). I started walking across to Broadway. I stopped for a newspaper and I saw it right away in the lower left hand corner of the front page, double columned and continued on page eighteen.

And everybody identified: Algernon Hale, West Coast art dealer; Charlie Batesem, East Coast hood; Sally Irvine, forty-two years old, a cardiac case recently released from the penal hospital after a sojourn for shoplifting.

Everybody identified.

Okay for Charlie (there were fingerprints on file) and okay for Sally (there were fingerprints too)—these were people on whom the law could flip records. But it wasn't at all okay for Algernon. Not at all. Algernon Hale should have been as anonymous as broken bits of glass on the bathroom floor, and just as troublesome.

I went into the Essex House for a cigarette and a side-car.

Then it came to me.

Dear Pierre Vyseuseau.

I went out and I changed my course. I took a cab to the Waldorf and I knocked on the door of 1212 and it wasn't opened by Pierre Vyseuseau—it was opened by Ralph March.

"Ralph," I said.

"Peter Chambers."

"Ralph," I said.

"Peter Chambers. How do you do and please come in, unless the idea is to stand here and mumble names."

Ralph March, dapper and elegant in double-breasted blue; horseshoe-bald with a close white fringe; a small man with a small red mouth and a thin straightaway mustache and an enunciation as precise as the movements of a flamenco dancer.

"Ralph March," I said.

"Stop it, Chambers."

I came in and I presented him with my hat and coat. He took them and laid them on a chair and he toddle-stepped to the phone. He walked like the girl (at last) that had been frantically waving her hand in the classroom. He also walked like a California elf, which he was.

He hoisted one eyebrow. He said: "What?"

"Side-car," I said.

"Room service," he said to the mouthpiece. "Four side-cars." He hung up and he mimicked, in falsetto, "Ralph March," and he smiled.

When he smiled his face scrunched up like a squeezed half-orange and the ruts in the hollows under his cheekbones deepened and his little blue eyes got lost between the lids on top of his eyes and the bags under his eyes.

"Well," I said. "Frankly, I didn't expect you here."

He took out a thin brown cigar and he lit it.

Came a tap on the door.

He said, "Thank you," to Room Service and he took the tray and paid the boy and tipped him. He handed me the grey-yellow cocktail and sipped his and said, "Ah, good," and he put the tray on the desk and sat down in the desk chair and sipped and puffed until he finished the cocktail.

He put the empty glass on the tray. "I've been having rather a rough time here."

"Yes," I said.

He puffed again. Hard. "A friend of mine has been murdered. Of all things. Bizarre circumstances. Perhaps you read about it?"

"Bizarre," I said. "There it goes again."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Did you?"

"Did I what?"

"Read about it."

"I don't understand."

"Did you read about it? In the papers."

"I mean I don't understand about your friend and the bizarre circumstances. That stuff."

He transferred the cigar to his left hand, and he snapped the fingers of his right hand. Three times, and sharply. "Fortuitous, or whatever—you're here. I am horribly upset. Horribly. Would you like a case?"

"I always like a case," I said and I got up and changed my empty glass for a full one and sat down.

"Listen, please. Algernon Hale. Did you ever hear of Algernon Hale? The Algernon Hale Galleries."

"I have heard of Algernon Hale."

"He was found here in New York. Stabbed. Nude. In an automobile. Two other people, also. A lady and a man. Dead, too, and naked."

"My," I said.

"Stop it."

"What?"

"The ham imitation of a sophisticate."

"The hell with that. What's all this got to do with me? Where's Vyseuseau?"

"Mr. Vyseuseau is downtown at Police Headquarters. He was called for by two thickset gentlemen about half hour ago. He is being examined in connection with Hale's murder. We had just begun to discuss that when they arrived."

"What's he got to do with it?"

"What?"

"Hale."

"They were affiliated, businesswise."

"Hale and the Frenchman?"

"Yes."

"Did he know about Hale's murder?"

"Of course not."

So he hadn't talked. So he *was* interested. So he and the Little Guy did have a deal. So our basic premise was good and basic. Dear Pierre Vyseuseau. I wondered about the charming anecdotes he was furnishing for the law.

"All right," I said. "Where do I fit in?"

"Look here," he said. "Look here."

"Take it easy, Ralphie."

"Look here. I came out on the same train with Hale. In a separate drawing room. He was accompanied by two rather unsavory people. He knew I was on the train. They didn't."

"What unsavory people?"

"A Mr. O'Shea and a henchman, one Charles Batesem. A business transaction in which I was interested."

"Shape it up, dear man. Sift it down."

He got up and he marched the carpet and the taffeta lining of his beautiful suit (or maybe his underwear) swished like small waves on a pebbled beach on a windless night in the summer. Then he stopped and drew on his cigar, meditatively. Then he started again. He did it that way for five minutes (while I drank his cocktail).

Then he sat down.

"Please listen carefully. The subject matter of the business transaction was a group of tapestries. Extremely valuable. Originally they were brought to Hale as a prospective purchaser. Hale called me in as an expert. I verified them as authentic. I told him that in my opinion those tapestries were originals, probably stolen in Europe during the war. The seller wanted two hundred thousand dollars. That was dirt cheap. Dirt cheap. Except that it would have to be a sub-rosa deal, that Hale would have to dispose of them, at a profit, of course, in the same manner that he made the purchase. Under the counter, as it were. Hale was not entirely convinced as to their authenticity, so I made him a proposition. I would purchase a half interest. Hale agreed, my lawyers drew the papers, and we were partners. Except."

"Except?" I inquired.

"My lawyers informed me that, legally, there was a risk, that neither Hale nor myself had ownership of the tapestries, despite the fact that we paid for them and had a good and binding bill of sale; provided what I thought was a fact—that is, that originally they were stolen. It appears that there is a tenet of law that states that no title can pass as to ownership of stolen material. I told that to Hale, and together we decided that, regardless, at the price, we were willing to accept the gamble of turning them over, sooner or later, at a profit."

"Then?"

"Then came a most fortunate event. I learned that a representative of the French government was in the States for the express purpose of recovering the tapestries and that he was willing to pay a reward of two million dollars for them, which is something in the neighborhood of their true worth. Mr. O'Shea was go-between. Hale and O'Shea and the tapestries, which I helped pack into a gigantic Gladstone, came here to New York to meet Vyseuseau, the French representative. And I. I went along to protect my half interest. Hale was to meet Vyseuseau and arrange for the consummation of our business. I had reservations at the Ambassador. Hale was to stay with Mr. O'Shea until the deal was closed, as his guest. He was supposed to call me at the Ambassador."

Edgily I said, "And he didn't."

"He didn't."

"So you went to the police."

"No. I called O'Shea. Most of the night. No answer."

"Then you went to the police."

"I waited until four o'clock in the morning. Then I called the police."

"Did you tell them about the tapestries?"

"No."

"What did you tell them?"

"I told them just when Hale had arrived in New York and with whom, that he should have been in touch with me, and that he hadn't been. That I was extremely worried."

"Did you give them the whole story?"

"I told them everything. I omitted the business end."

"Just a minute," I said. "Let's get this one thing straight. Why did you hold out about the business?"

He smoothed at his eyebrows with thumb and forefinger. "Because of the dubious nature of my legal title to the tapestries. I have a hundred thousand dollars invested. If there is seizure by the vested authorities—I don't know, I might become involved in the legal difficulties of which my lawyers had warned me."

"Check," I said. "Then what?"

"I received a call at about nine o'clock this morning. I was told that Charles Batesem had been found dead, and a woman, and an unidentified man. Since Mr. Batesem had accompanied Mr. Hale, there was the possibility that the other man was Hale. Would I come down to the morgue and see. Can you imagine?"

"What?"

"Me. In the morgue. Before breakfast."

"No," I said. "I cannot imagine."

"My breakfast was brandy, lots of brandy. Then I went."

"All right. So the corpse was Hale. But not hearty."

That stank.

It got the shout of silence it deserved.

We were both quiet for a few minutes. I looked at empty cocktail glasses. Then I said, "What are you doing here? In this apartment?"

He sighed. Prissily. "Through my New York paper, one of my syndicated outlets, I ascertained the whereabouts of Pierre Vyseuseau. I called him in the afternoon. He was out. I finally reached him, not too long ago, and I came here to discuss this with him."

"By the way," I said. "How come Vyseuseau gets mixed up with cops? Do you know?"

"Yes. I had told them that Hale was in New York to discuss certain matters with Vyseuseau. I did not want to omit any information that I thought might help. I was terribly worried, and, as it happens, with cause. I told Vyseuseau precisely what I had told the police and precisely what I had not, before they came for him."

"One thing. What about this Vyseuseau? Does he check?"

"Completely. We investigated. Vyseuseau is as authentic as the tapestries he is seeking to recover. There is no question about that."

I leaned back. "How's Madeline?" I said.

"Who?"

"Madeline Howell?"

"Who?"

"Madeline Howell. She works on a paper that runs your weekly article."

I watched him.

Irritably he said, "Now how would I know? What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing. She's a friend of mine. I thought you knew her."

"Never saw her in my life."

That was that.

I looked again. There just weren't any more cocktails.

I lit a cigarette. "Well?"

Very slowly he said: "Ours was a survivor-take-all agreement."

"What?" I said.

"Yes," he said.

"Why?"

"Because of the subject matter. As it happens, both of us are bachelors, so there wasn't any immediate family to worry about. It is not unusual, in joint ventures of this sort, that a survivor-take-all clause is inserted. We didn't want any outsiders and estate botching it up and perhaps causing embarrassment to the survivor in the long-chance event that one of us died. Neither of us expected to die, really; together we hoped to dispose of the tapestries in a short enough time, at a profit. This was to be no long-term pull. Both of us had excellent connections in the field."

I crossed my legs. I nodded. I said, "I see."

"All right. Hale is dead. Right now I am not interested in Hale. I am interested in Ralph March. I came here to discuss it with Vyseuseau, to cease being the silent partner, to become sole owner. I didn't have time to tell him. Now you're here. This might become involved. All right. I would like to hire a good resourceful man to protect my interests."

"They need protecting."

"What do you mean?"

"If they ever find out about that survivor-take-all stuff plus that you held out on them about the business—you're liable to wind up as a Grade-A Number-One suspect."

"Ridiculous."

"Where were you last night?"

"In my room at the hotel. Most of the time."

"Can you prove it?"

"Well . . . I made phone calls."

"People can do all sorts of things in between phone calls and before they started making phone calls and after they ceased making phone calls. Were you with anybody during all of that time?"

"No. I was alone."

"See what I mean?"

He didn't answer.

I stood up and came close to him and put my hand on his shoulder. "There's another thing. Don't jump. They've been stolen."

"What?"

"The tapestries."

"My God, man, what are you talking about. How would *you* know?"

I backed away from him. "Take my word for it, Ralphie. What do you think I'm doing here?"

He reached for a cocktail. There was no cocktail.

"See here," he said. Then he said: "Look, I'm confused. I don't know of any reason in the world why you should lie to me. If they have been stolen, that makes it so much worse. Will you please handle this thing for me? Will you?"

"Do you have your contracts with Hale?"

"Of course."

"Where?"

He tapped his jacket. "Right here. I was going to show them to Vyseuseau."

"How much would you pay me?"

He thought about that. "I don't know," he said.

I went to the couch and I sat down. He came over and sat alongside and he tickled at his mustache. I tickled at mine.

"You could," I said, "pick up two million dollars."

"Mm," he said.

"Mm," I said, "but two million."

"What about it?"

"What's one per cent?"

"Please."

"That's it. For one per cent I'm your boy."

He crossed his legs. Daintily. He uncrossed them. He crossed them again. "My God, man. That's a heck of a lot of money."

In hurt dignity I said, "For *my* services?"

"A heck of a lot of money."

"Don't get excited, Ralphie. You pay me only if you collect. Contingent."

He stopped crossing and uncrossing his legs.

I said, "Let's see the contract."

He reached in and brought it out of an inside jacket pocket and he gave it to me. I read it. Survivor-take-all, all right. It ended on top of page five, with a lot of blank space underneath. I took out my pen and I wrote: "I hereby retain Peter Chambers to recover the tapestries herein mentioned. I promise to pay Mr. Chambers one per cent of whatever I may realize upon the sale (or reward) of same. It is understood that Mr. Chambers knows of his own knowledge (and can prove if question arises) that as of this writing, these tapestries were stolen from Algernon Hale."

I affixed the date and time and I handed it back to him. He read it.

"See what I mean?" I said. "Protection, and all. Only I hope you didn't sort of do this job on Hale yourself, because that way neither of us is going to make any money. Believe me."

He frowned at me. Then he took my pen and stared again at what I had written and sighed from deep; then he signed. I took back my pen. I also took the contract. "That's my protection," I said. "Also I might need it somewhere along the line to show my authorization."

My problem in ethics was more jumbled. But now I was being paid enough not to care too terribly. Viggy O'Shea, Madeline Howell, Ralph March. Everybody loves a valise.

I said, "How much actual conversation did you get in with Vyseuseau?"

"Not much."

"That's good. You don't tell him anything. You don't tell him that you have any interest in the tapestries. You shut up all over. You let me do it, which is what you're paying me for. For Vyseuseau, you came here as a friend of Hale's, to talk about it. By the way, did Vyseuseau have anything at all to say about tapestries?"

"Just that he had been informed that the deal had been postponed. That a Barry Drumgoole had called upon him with a message from O'Shea that the deal was temporarily held up."

I went for my hat and coat. "So long, Ralphie. Nice visit. I hope a profitable one for both of us. I'll be in touch with you."

"Yes," he said. "The Ambassador. 1806. I'll be there several days. Then I'm due back West."

"Sure enough," I said.

"Oh. One moment. What do you want me to tell Vyseuseau? I mean, any message. I'm going to wait for a while."

"No message. The guy doesn't know me from a hitching post. I was told a friend of mine might be here, so I dropped by. A guy, Barry Drumgoole. But I can't wait. I've got a date. I'm going dancing."

"Dancing?" Ralph March said and he opened his mouth and he let his chin dangle.

"Dancing," I said. "What in all hell is wrong with dancing?"

He collected his chin. "Yes," he said. "Dancing."

Chapter X

New York has two types of dance halls. There's the kind that's as dim as a sucker's memory, with occasional soft lights from a revolving chandelier and a smooth floor and dark corners and firm-fleshed hostesses without girdles.

The admission fee is nominal.

Gaudy men in the street hawk at you, puller-in guys: and it takes you a few minutes, inside, to become accustomed to the dimness and the dopey effect of the heavy perfume. You fortify yourself with a short beer (no hard stuff for sale) and you hitch at your pants and you buy yourself a dollar's worth of tickets. You stand at a barrier and you look at the girls in their satiny evening gowns and they look at you. They also widen their eyes or narrow their eyes or bust out a round hip or breathe deeply and hold it so you can see how much they've got upstairs or they wiggle slightly, invitingly. You take your choice and you slide your hand across a warm bare back; and then it's up to you.

Every minute or so, there's a click. That's a dance.

You clip off a ticket and you hand it to the girl, which marks you as a tourist or a kid or a gentle old man with no hair on his face and an eagerly ticking heart. But if you're wise or you've been around or you've been tipped off, you handle it differently. You buy about three dollars' worth of tickets at once. You go up to the barrier and you pick on one your size, preferably a warm-eyed wide-eyed one, with exposure, and you fit your arm around the curve of her body and you give her the fist-full of tickets all at once and you look at her, derring-do. Things happen. You are danced into a cozy corner and she folds an eager body onto yours and her yielding yearning curves press tightly against you; she dances with a sultry mischievous slowness, smiling slightly, then she moves her mouth to the side of your face and hums the music in your ear, and you sort of don't get off a dime. After a few clicks, you have had enough. Downstairs, you buy yourself a fast shot of whiskey, maybe two, and you wipe your face with a handkerchief and you go to a movie and you sit as far away from people as you can, remembering the cloy-sweet perfume and the look of the contemptuous half-smile.

That's one kind of dance hall.

That's the kind that fathers lecture their boys about.

That is not the Utopia Ballroom.

The Utopia Ballroom is the other kind of dance hall.

The boys and girls gather there, from eighteen to sixty-five. On a good night they pile in two, three thousand. The boys want girls and the girls want boys; everybody wants to dance: Lindy, Peabody, Tango, Rumba; slow stuff, too. Generally, you strike up hobnob with a cute little trick and you have a couple of beers and you hobnob some more and you complain about how stuffy it is with all these people (and, my, where do they all come from?) and you have another beer and you hobnob more, and at one-thirty it is closing time. You go out and you buy her a Cuba Libre or maybe ham and eggs and you take her home and make a little love under the stairs.

You cue up with the rest of them outside the Utopia and you pay a dollar and a quarter for the entrance privilege (ladies cheaper).

Inside, you turn to your right and you go down a flight of stairs. You stand in line and check your hat and coat. On the counter there's a money clinker that looks like a wooden salad bowl with a slit on bottom. Quarters repose along the slot. If you leave a dime, you get a disenchanted glance and your dime is quickly slid into the little slot and jingles in the money box beneath. If you drop a quarter, the girl says thank you and leaves it there. I left a half dollar, just to see what would happen. The girl said, "Thank you very much," and she smiled at me as though she owned the concession instead of getting a fast thirty-five a week for saying thank you for the quarters and pushing the dimes into the slot.

Next stop is the men's room.

You stand behind the slick-haired boys and you comb your hair and you smile at yourself hugely. Everybody looks in the mirror and smiles hugely. It is to see that your face is in shape for smiling prettily (and less hugely) when you ask a lady to dance. It is also to see that there are no specks of tobacco between your teeth and that you are beautiful. Everybody wants to be beautiful in a dance hall.

Then you go up another set of stairs into the dance hall proper.

It was an immense room with a tremendous rail-enclosed dance floor. It could easily accommodate fifteen hundred couples. It was, in fact, accommodating at least fifteen hundred couples as I came up the stairs. A name band shot the music at them from a bandstand in the corner. There was another bandstand in another corner, for the rumba band when the name band took relief for a smoke or a fast one from a bottle or a visit to the men's room for more relief or a dab at the hair and a smile at the mirror.

There was a balcony upstairs with a beer bar. Along the side, upstairs, there was a lounge with easy chairs so you could rest with the lady of your choice and try out your propositions. Downstairs there were seats all along the walls, and off to a side there were chairs and tables where you could have your beer served to you and talk about it in comparative privacy.

Crag-faced bouncers, with shoulders like stuffed sea-bags, towered amongst the dancers, circulating with ponderous grace. They were hired for their rocky beauty, their height and their adroitness in picking up and putting down when the boys with stuff in the flask pocket (a nip in the toilet and beer on the balcony) began to resent matters. ("I resent that," in liquid tones is not limited to the plush-and-silver caves in the East Fifties.)

I pushed through the throng of stags and the hopeful hopeless girls with the funny faces until I came to a raised velvet-roped dais where the hostesses sat like the gentry in a box at the opera. If you're bashful, if you're old, if you want the fragrance of young impersonal beauty—there are always hostesses in the Utopia, in all the Utopias all over the world, for, of course, a fee.

I looked at them. They didn't look at me.

There were ten of them, truly beautiful, and from the front row center a face came up fast and hit me like a jolting, unexpected crash of cymbals, and, for a moment, I was back again in Madeline Howell's apartment tipsily engaged with a smoldering face out of a smoky-yellow background.

Mona Crawford.

Yes. *But yes.*

2

I shoved through to the glass-encased booth with the gilt-lettered legend: "INSTRUCTION CARDS. HALF HOUR CARDS—$1.50." and I said, "One hour," to a henna-haired lady with a scrawny neck and she said, "Three dollars," and she gave me a punched timecard and a large smile opulent with hooks from the bridgework. I went back to the velvet rope and I said, "May I?" to front row center and I handed her the card.

She looked at me and she smiled.

My heart began typing love letters to my stomach.

That's the way I'm put together. Farmboy Peter from the sticks.

She stood up and unhooked the velvet rope and she came through, still smiling: absent, expressionless, professional. She moved toward me; a tall young woman, sectioned off in luscious bunches, undulating slightly in a strapless, frontless, backless evening gown, cream-borscht pink and clinging. Then she stopped and the smile went away and she looked at me again like she'd just come awake, toes to head and back again, and a new slow smile crept across her face: not absent, not expressionless, not professional. Brother, but no.

She was coal-eyed and oval-faced with a little nose and tender nostrils and a high forehead and long black upgoing eyebrows and thick dark hair, parted down the middle, framing her face and lounging on her bare shoulders in rough-massed ringlets. Her lips were curved and full and cushiony-soft and pouting, cherry-ripe-red and moist.

She came up close to me, very close, and she stopped.

"Shall we dance?" I said, with blessed originality.

"That's the way it looks."

I touched her fingers and we went to a break in the rail and we stepped onto the dance floor and I put my arm around her and my cheek against her cheek and we moved to the music.

It was a waltz, Strauss, and they were playing it well, and this was a lovely lissome lass in my arms and the false stars twinkled down from the ceiling and for once life was good and life was beautiful for a shamus out on a pitch—

"Too tight," she said.

"What?"

"Too tight, that's what. We dance at three beans an hour for the house. Or we kick feet. But we don't hug, swell feller. It's not allowed."

I churned around with her, rhythmically. I bumped a couple of close-knit couples. I pulled up my head to apologize, but nobody knew me from glissando on the slide trombone. The music was good. I was getting warm. There was a lot of cigarette smoke. There was a lot of perspiration.

"Too tight," she said again, suddenly, sadly.

"Mona," I said. "You're nuts. You are gorgeous and even beautiful and completely out of this world, but you're nuts. You've got a fixation. You need a psychiatrist, but more than that you need a two-way stretch."

She jumped, settled back, then she grabbed me.

"Too tight," I moaned.

"*Mona!*" she said.

"Too tight. *Please.* Think of me being squeezed between a couple of those gruesome bouncers. Think of my boiling point . . ."

No joke about the boiling point. The girl had an exciting body, an exciting voice, an exciting breath; the kind of business that either you are born with or you just don't have (like the nice ladies with the propensity for screeching song into the nearest microphone as soon as they have tossed off sufficient antiseptic). Pressure was in me like a pressure cooker, and my forehead was getting slippery.

"Who the devil are you?" Mona said.

"Let's have a beer, kid."

"But who . . .?"

"How's about a beer?"

"All right. All right."

We broke and I led her off to the side where the tables were. "Two beers," I said to the waiter.

"Bottles or glasses?"

"How?"

"Bottles or glasses, that is how. Bottles is bottles and glasses is tap. That is how, and I got no time, mister."

"Oh. Bottles."

"Bottles is sixty-five cents a crack."

"Bottles," I said.

He went away.

"I knew it," she said.

"What?"

"Bottles."

"You knew it," I said, unhappily. "Bottles."

"I'm in love with you."

"Quit it."

"You have something. Presence. Whatever they call it."

"What the hell has that got to do with bottles? Excuse me."

"For what?"

"For the hell."

"Don't be silly. It's got everything."

"What's got everything?"

"To do."

"*To do?*"

"Whoa. Please. It has everything to do. To do with what you asked me. Look, you're the kind of a man who won't risk dirty beer pipes in a place like this. So you order bottles. And what's the difference about the sixty-five cents per. That's what I meant before. About presence. I'm in love with you. Just like that. You stood there in front of me asking me to dance, shylike and sort of embarrassed, and all of a sudden I'm in love again. It's funny. It's never happened to me like that, ever."

"Stop with the kidding," I said.

"I'm not kidding."

The waiter came with the bottles. He unhooked the caps and he poured a little into each glass. "A dollar thirty," he said. I gave him two dollars and I waved my hand. "Thank you," he said.

She filled her glass quickly and thickly with a large head and she dug in and drank half. She moved her chair close to mine. I felt the touch of her thigh. "Well?" she said.

"We left off," I said, "where you loved me. I was standing there shylike in front of you and you loved me."

"No. How did you know my name?"

"Mona?"

"Mona."

"Mona Crawford?"

"Mona Crawford."

"You were there," I said, "between casement windows over a large day bed with cushions."

"Madeline," she said.

"An angry face. A magnificent, angry, passionate face."

"You like her?"

"Sure I like her."

"I mean Madeline Howell."

"Sure I like her."

"No you don't. She's old and hard and brittle."

I drank beer.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I'm sorry I said that."

"The hell with it."

"Do you go for her? Really?"

"Sure I go for her."

Sharply she said, "Stop laughing at me. Do you or don't you?"

"I don't. I go for you."

"That's better."

She filled her glass and she filled mine. She leaned back and she half-closed her eyes and she probed a caressing finger at my chin and I got prickly as an asterisk.

She brought the words out long and slow: "I don't know. Maybe it's the blue eyes with the dark lashes, maybe it's the way that lick of black hair falls over that nasty eyebrow, maybe it's that high-up eyebrow itself. It's not the slick mustache, a mustache doesn't mean a thing to me. Maybe it's the way you talk or your manner or because you're long and lean, or maybe the way you wear those expensive casual clothes..."

"*Wh-a-a-t?*"

She leaned closer. "I hate a cold-eyed so-and-so like you," she whispered. She moved away an inch. "Where'd you get the English on the ball, feller?"

"Look," I said, "sister. I love it. But just in case; if you're making for a conquest, it'll fold. I've been conquered before. It adds up trouble when you start making with conquests like you're making now."

She winked at me, manlike, squeezing one side of her face together and letting go, fast and no flutter.

"You won't have trouble with me," she said, "brother."

The way she said it, I wished it was bourbon in my hand instead of beer. I drank the beer like it was bourbon and I wiped my lips, like it was beer and not bourbon, with the back of my hand.

"Let's keep it," I said, "like the way you said about the clothes. Casual."

She moved away another inch. "Okay by me, baby. But I dare you. Remember that. Maybe you have been conquered before. But, sonny, you have never been conquered by me. Yet."

Sonny.

I'd say she was twenty-one.

I'd say I was thirty-six, with enough lines on my face to prove it.

She slid a quiet warm hand over mine.

"Let's get."

"Can you?"

"I'm going upstairs. I'm reporting sick." She patted my other hand under the table and she slipped two fingers up along my wrist beneath my shirt-cuff. "Look. I'm hungry. You know the Turf here on Broadway?"

"Sure."

"Ever eat those miniature sandwiches up at the bar?"

"Sure."

"I love them. They have a tiny steak sandwich on a soft roll dipped in natural gravy that sends me."

"I know. It sends me too."

"They also have a tiny Virginia ham sandwich, same style. When you order both of them, combination, one sandwich—sweetheart, it is heavenly. And can I eat!" She let go my hand. "All right, trouble, I'll meet you at the Turf bar in fifteen minutes," and she swished off in her gorgeous dream-dress, smoked-salmon pink and marvelously filled, where it was filled.

3

We ate sandwiches at the Turf. We drank whiskey and soda at the Number One bar and listened to the two pianos. We drank whiskey and water at the White Rose Café on Fifty-second Street where black and white mix like checks on houndstooth slacks. We sat on stools around Leon and Eddie's oval bar and listened to Eddie Davis sing *Coming Round the Mountain* to the hillbillies. We sat amongst the diamonds at the Monte Carlo. We had whiskey sours at the China Doll. We had raviola at the Panda.

We went home.

To Gracie Square. One floor higher. 4B.

She took off her coat and put it over her arm and she swung her hat off and shook out her hair. She took my hat and coat and patted my cheek and went away. I stood in the middle of the room and I waited.

She came back and she said, "You're a problem for me. I've got a sweetheart and a boy friend. Now, I've got you. Too."

She came near and she looked up at me, then she moved in close, head down, like a tired fighter steering for a clinch. I reached around and my left hand squirmed at the thick piled hair on her shoulders and I tugged and her face tilted up and I looked at the pouting parted shining lips. The palm of my right hand brushed her jaw and my fingers took her cheeks and brought her face over and I spread my mouth over her mouth, the way her lips had been begging from the moment I talked to her, and the tip of her tongue came through and hammers started banging in my stomach.

I saw the door open. I was facing it.

It didn't make a sound. It just opened.

There are people who close their eyes when they kiss and there are people who don't close their eyes when they kiss and there are people who sometimes close their eyes and sometimes they don't.

I don't: when it's strictly for hammers in the stomach.

I saw the door open.

I kept right on kissing.

Chapter XI

"Very nice," the small man said.

She didn't turn around.

The softness went out of her lips and her back hardened and I could feel her fingernails. She moved her head and she looked up at me, her eyes widening like spilled wine on a white tablecloth. She was a smart girl and she liked me and she did her best. She kept her body between me and the two men in the doorway.

It was the first time I had seen the Little Guy.

I had heard about the ex-jockey, the terrible pygmy, the little giant who had clawed his way up from quiet murderer to smart money. Now I saw him. I saw him at a disadvantage, alongside a great bulk of a man, but he had that something: I saw the Little Guy practically exclusively. He was less than five feet tall with innocent brown eyes and a smooth narrow face that was handsome despite the thin nose that was hooked like a Chinaman's fingernail. He was very erect and his hair was white, but young and shiny, and he wore it long and crush-brushed flat and dandy over his ears. He carried a cigarette in a holder and he wore a ring on each finger of his left hand except his thumb.

I knew the mountain that came with him. Max Crumb; six-feet-six of piled-up flesh, with a face as lopsided as a newlywed's mattress, with tremendous weight up from the thighs and one clam ear and hands the size of four-dollar steaks at Paul the Dutchman's.

But you looked at the Little Guy.

His mouth moved gently and his face was composed, but the dark blue felt hat in his right hand was doing a tap dance on his knee.

"How do you do?" he said.

Mona's hands dropped from around me and she sucked in her lower lip and she put her teeth down over it. I moved her over to a side.

The small man looked at me curiously. "What's your name?"

"Me?"

"No. The Russian in the Kremlin. Him. Not you."

"I know the guy," Max Crumb said. "A puddin' head."

He had a voice like his larynx was sprinkled with cockroach powder.

"Take him out of here," the small man said. "Take him downtown and polish him. Polish him good. Mark him up and tell him regards from the Little Guy."

"Let's go, bub," Max Crumb said.

I moved forward on Max Crumb as per direction. A rapid knee to the right place would cut him down to size. I would have to carom off to the Little Guy. I wasn't too worried about that. But Maxie was cautious. He put his hand in his pocket and it came up a plump flat-nosed sawed-off, tiny in the vastness of his fist, with a rude black muzzle.

That presented another problem.

I looked at the girl.

Gallantly I said, "How's about it?"

"Please," she said. "Don't worry about me. Please."

"Crumb," the small man said. "I want that thing out of there. I want it carted over to my place in Sea Gate. So take this monkey down there, polish him, get rid of him, and you and the boys wait for me till I get there. I want to talk to the frog first. Soon as I leave here."

Skin prickled around my ears. The Little Guy didn't know me from a rathole in the barn. He was talking about something I was very much interested in—I hoped. Max Crumb was going to have much less trouble with me than either of us had anticipated.

"Yeah, boss," he said.

"You ought to get going, Crumb," the small man said.

Max smiled and showed me an excellent porcelain upper.

"Crumb," he said. "That's the monicker. Let us go, bub."

"Okay," I said, "crumb."

His eyes squinted at me, merrily, and his lips spread out against the porcelain plate and the store teeth gleamed at me, viciously. He rumbled in his chest. He blew a blob of phlegm from the corner of his mouth. It splattered on my lapel like an obscene nosegay. I took out a handkerchief and I wiped it and I threw the handkerchief at his face and I missed.

"That's the monicker," he said. "Crumb. Let's go, puddin' head. You and me's going to have fun. Fun."

2

Baruch Place is a fancy name.

It used to be Goerck Street.

It is between Lewis and Mangin in the ghetto of the ghetto of Manhattan's lower east side. On the corner of Baruch Place and Houston Street a flake-painted white house rears up for six stories and looks like it is going to topple.

That's where Max and I pulled up in the convertible.

Max was a wrap-up; I could have taken him any number of times on the way downtown except that I had satchels in the head. With initials J.J.O'S.

He put his hand in his pocket.

"Don't worry too hard about me, Max," I said. "You know me, pal. I'm regular. And don't exert yourself, because you don't have to impress anybody. After all, the boss is with his girl friend, so it's just you and me, and maybe the boys upstairs."

"You shouldn't have ought to fiddle with the boss' tomato," he said. "If you know what I mean."

There were no boys upstairs.

We climbed up five weary wooden flights and Max put keys into two Yale locks and directly we were in a kitchen with clean linoleum on the floor. Max bawled, "Hello? Hello, guys," and nobody answered and he grumbled, "Hell," and he slammed the door behind him. Everything was clean and new; sink and washtub and refrigerator and white table and cupboards and kitchen chairs and utensil closets, and an Army cot along one wall. Max was careful with the gun while he took off his hat and coat and tossed them on the cot. I tossed mine too.

Then he slid out of his jacket and he let it drop to the floor and he slipped off his tie and he opened the top button of his shirt and hair of his chest pinked up like black wires. His stomach, thick and ponderous, bulged over his suspenderless pants like a bursting sausage, tight and strained against his shirt.

I couldn't rush him. He knew how to hold a gun.

"Take it off," he said.

"What?"

"Take off your jacket."

He reached up to a shelf over the washtub and his hand came down with the fingers ornamented in metal knuckles.

"Take it off," he said. "It's a nice suit. What's the sense to spoil it?"

I took my jacket off. I hung it over the clean white kitchen chair.

"Smart enough," he said. "I'm going to have to mark you up. You take your shirt off too if you don't want spots on it. You strip all the way down, if you like."

I stood still and I swallowed.

Viggy O'Shea and his goddam satchel.

He came up to me and he shoved the gun, in his left hand, against my belly. He swung with the other hand and the brass scraped against my jaw and I bounced off the wall and I sat down. I shook my head and I stood up. He came back, gun first, and he swung again. My head got twisted around my neck. I sprawled on the uncomfortable floor, blood dripping on my shirt, the inside of my mouth swelled up to my teeth.

I should have stripped down.

I pushed up against the wall. "Max . . ."

"Don't talk, bub." He let go again, high on my left cheekbone and my face opened and the blood came down and the other side of my face slammed against the wall, which kept me on my feet, and I stood there on legs like pipe-cleaners and I heard myself moan and I didn't like it. I wavered on my pipe-cleaners and I kept shaking my head like a preliminary boy at the Garden and then I saw him, vaguely, and I heard him.

"What are you? A hero? A wise guy that wants a medal? Why don't you go into a comma?"

"Coma," I croaked.

"Comma," he said, "like when you're out like a light."

"Coma," I said.

"Coma, comma, you know what I mean, bub. You swoon, or you swan, or swoop, or something. You can't hit a guy when he's out like a light."

I saw him now, clearly.

"You like dough, Max?"

"I love dough."

"A lot of dough?"

"I love a lot of dough. Dough gives with dames and dough gives with eats. What else do I want? Sleep? Sleep I can get for nothing."

"You married, Max?"

"Sure I'm married."

"Kids?"

"Two kids. Another one in the oven."

"I got dough, Max."

"How much dough?"

"For you I've got a couple of G's."

"You are a phony, creep."

"Why?"

"Because nobody pays a couple G's not to get a licking, when they already got most of it."

"It's not for that, Max."

"For what?"

"For the valise."

"Valise?"

"Right."

"For the valise . . . *what?*"

"Two G's," I said. "Mostly for the valise."

"I'll be a son of a bitch."

He swung. With both hands. First he bounced my belly off my spine with the gun-hand and then he lifted one under my chin with the metal-ringed right. I swooned for him, finally; I swanned and I swooped. I went out like a match in a hurricane, and I stayed out.

3

He was sitting at the table in his undershirt, hair on his upper arms and shoulders; with a bottle of beer and a thick meat sandwich on French bread.

I was folded up in a near corner.

I tried to say something.

My chin wagged like a springboard after a high dive.

Panic moved in me. I worried that the guy had really hurt me. I thought about a doctor. Doing something. Quick. I tried again. I made a sound like a scratched record on a rundown Victrola.

He heard me. He put the sandwich aside. "No more, bub. You had your licking. Now don't go fooling around with the boss' girl no more. And don't talk about no suitcase. You could get a guy in trouble."

The gun was on the chair next to him and the chair wasn't too far from me. Maxie was all right. Maxie was a good boy. Maxie was utility. But Maxie wasn't brains.

I tried to smile. My face hurt. The back of my neck hurt. Blood was in my mouth. I swallowed. My throat hurt.

"You don't look so good, peeper," he said. "Maybe you would like some beer?"

I tried to shake my head. It shook.

I tried to stretch my leg. It stretched.

So, while he filled a glass with beer and bent over and handed it to me, I hooked my foot in the rung of the kitchen chair. The one with the gun on it.

I untangled my arms and I reached a hand out for the beer. I got my other hand around the glass and I drew it over, spillingly. I sipped some and it burned inside where my mouth was cut, but it helped. Then I raised the glass to my head and I turned it over and I let the cold beer run down my hair. It felt good. I twisted my neck around. It twisted.

Max giggled.

I handed up the glass and he took it and he turned to put it on the table. I tilted the chair with my foot and I lifted my leg.

That did two things.

It got the chair in his way.

It slid the gun into my lap.

I grabbed it. I said, "Take it easy, Max."

I felt much better. A gun in your hand is medicine. Confidence does something to your blood cells. He watched me, small-eyed and wicked. He could have had me then: but Max was utility, Max wasn't brains.

I scraped away from him on my bottom. I scraped along, facing him, all the way to the other side of the room, and I sat against the wall and now *I* had *him.* We sat like that and we looked at each other and then he rattled up out of the chair.

"Give it to me."

"I'll give it to you," I said. "Believe me."

"Give me the gun."

"Don't be a chump, baby."

"I'll break you," he said, and he started coming, slowly.

Poor Max without the brains. *Now* he was going to take me.

"I wouldn't, Max."

He kept coming. I shot him. In the left thigh. He kept on coming, slowly. I shot him in the same thigh again and he kept on coming and I let him have another one in the right leg and he kept coming and I saved the rest of them for higher up when he got real close, and then he dropped to his knees and he kept moving like that, panting, on his knees, and then he stopped.

I didn't wait.

I got up on my feet and I went to him and I teetered and then I threw one all the way from the shoe tops. I threw it with my right with the gun slanting sidewise. I threw it with everything that was left in me, bowling-ball fashion, like you need a ten-strike and you hate the pins; but straightaway, no English. It caught him spruce on the point of the chin and I heard the crunch of vertebrae as his head flashed back and hit bottom, and there he was like a bent Buddhist; his toes touching and his knees touching and then the great inverted arc of his belly and then his head touching; and his breath came in gurgles like soda pop out of a bottle.

I didn't have to do it.

Mostly, it was for business.

A private richard must not absorb a licking unless he returns it twofold, approximately; it is one of the rules of our outrageous game. If not, he might as well shut up shop. He has lost prestige like blood out of a jugular swipe and there is no transfusion. The boys snicker about it, and they gossip like ladies around a ma-jong table. It's no good.

I listened to him breathe, and I left him there.

I started looking for the satchel. I started at the far end of the railroad flat. I started way back in the bedroom. I fainted there. I came to and I was sick and then I went to the bathroom and I took all my clothes off and I took a cold bath. I did what I could with my face in the mirror, it wasn't too bad, but warm blood from inside my mouth kept running down into my throat. I tickled at the holes with the tip of my tongue. The inside of my cheeks felt like underdone hamburger. I wiped my body and I left my hair wet and I wondered whether I needed a stitch in the dry, wide, meat-exposed split on top of my left cheekbone.

I looked in on Max; then I started looking for the satchel again. I started at the far end of the railroad flat.

I worked all the way back to the kitchen.

I found it there, hidden under the porcelain cover of the washtub; not hidden, really; out of sight, more, like a cold sore under a mustache.

I got it out and I sat on it and I put my head down between my knees and I waited until nausea crept down from my throat back into my stomach. Then I stood up and straightened out Max Crumb and I worried a moment about his delicate breathing. I stretched him out flat on his face and I left him there.

I took the bag and I switched off the lights.

Chapter XII

I rested among the paint peelings and the rust of the stoop of the flaky white house, and I summed up. I didn't feel well. I wanted to retch but I couldn't retch. My stomach was bloated and stiff as a derby hat and electric trains were loose in my head. I looked at my watch. It was a quarter to five in the morning. Dirt-grey dawn was ragged around the tenements.

To my left, the street was all dark; to my right, a block away, a store window wore lights. I got up, slanted as a drunk with an extra load, and I dragged the bag and I dragged my feet. Toward the window with the lights.

It was an all-night restaurant with a coffee urn and a counter and five stools and three tables. It smelled like old people in the heat of the summer. I sat at a table and I looked at a boothless pay phone attached to the wall. I was alone; me and the flies. I reached for a jar with dried-up mustard and I whacked it against the wooden table.

The old man waddled out of the rear.

Sleep was angry in his eyes.

"Good morning," he said. He didn't mean it.

He was a large bald man wrapped inside of a spotted white apron. "How do you? Would you like it something?"

"I would like to sit for a while, if I may."

The words weren't coming out right. Each word took a piece of the next word but left a piece of itself. I ran my tongue along the crevices inside my mouth and I waited.

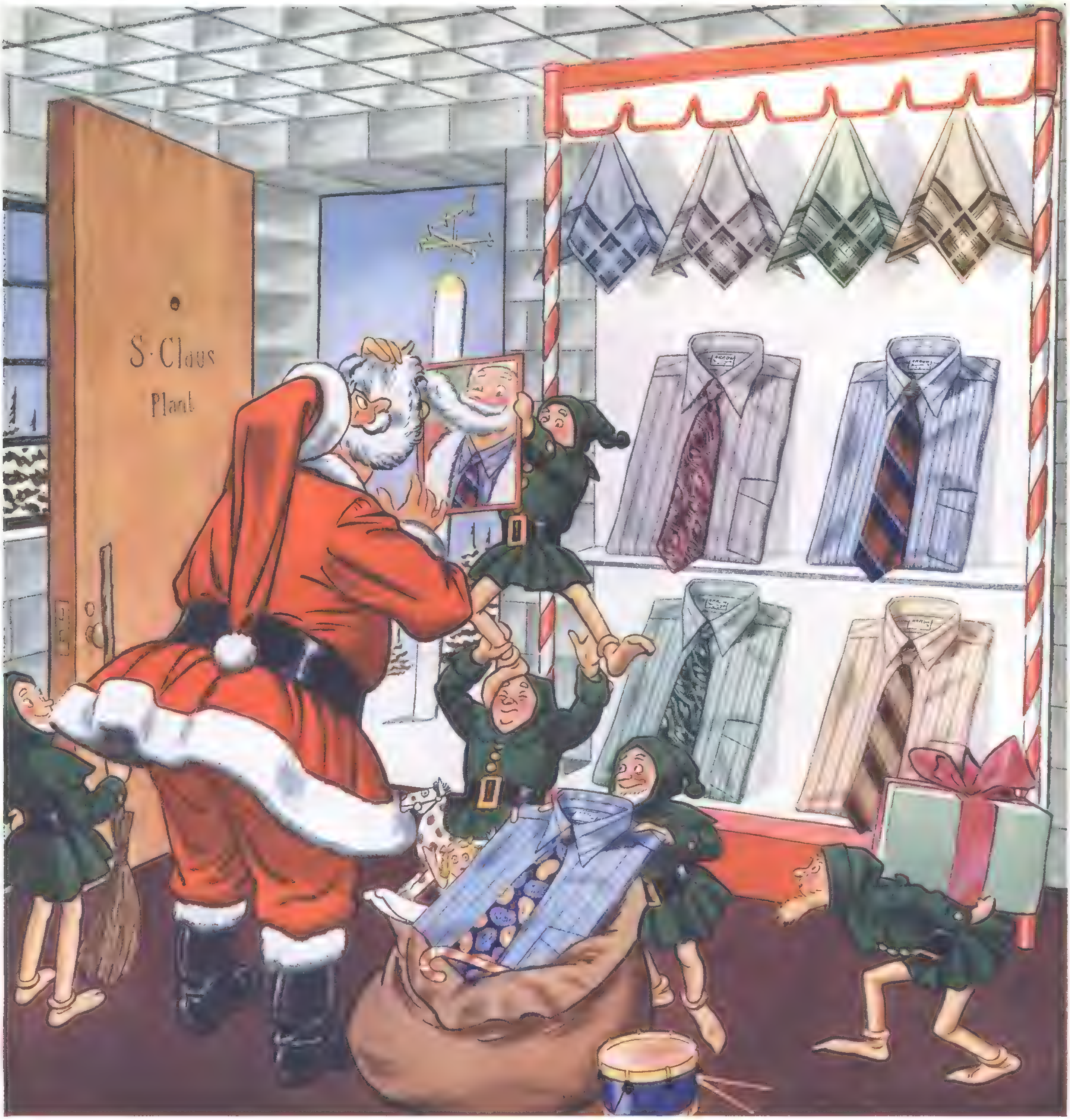
The fat man understood me.

"Sure sure. Would you like it to sit better by the counter with maybe coffee, or would you like it better to sitting by the table? Up to you."

"At the table. Like this. Thanks."

"Sure sure. Would you like it something to eat?"

(*Continued on page 119*)



"Warning! This year I may show up beardless!"

"It's a crying shame to let a crop of spinach — even *mine!* — curtain off the beauty of these new Arrow 'Carol Tones' shirt-tie-handkerchief combinations!

"WHAT Patterns! WHAT a collar! WHAT a shaped-to-*your*-shape 'Mitoga' cut! WHAT a Sanforized label!*

"Every man with a blue, brown, or grey suit will grin to his ears at the way each special ensemble points up said suit. (Shirts, ties, handkerchiefs are *made* for each other — and *for each suit.*)

"I'm delivering scads of 'Carol Tones' this Christmas! Why not one to your house, eh?" **fabric shrinkage held to 1%.*

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Look for the Arrow Trade-mark

ARROW

"CAROL TONES" SHIRTS

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"One more rehearsal and I quit!"

SHE: A dozen rehearsals for every take!
Why do I have to work for a perfectionist?
HE: Perfection makes stars . . .
or did I read that somewhere?

SHE: And my clothes! . . . I probably look
as glamorous as a ragbag by now.
HE: You look mighty good to me, sweetie pie.

SHE: You know, your suit seems to take it okay.
HE: Does it? There really must be something
in this Balanced Tailoring.

SHE: Balanced Tailoring . . . ?
HE: That's what it says in the Timely Clothes ads.
"Balanced Tailoring is a scientific blending
of fine needlework for supple softness—
machine sewing for stamina."
How's that for remembering lines?

SHE: Sold! Say, maybe *I* ought to do a male role!

Balanced Tailoring makes
TIMELY CLOTHES
look better . . . longer

TIMELY CLOTHES ARE MODERATELY PRICED, TOO . . . AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR NEAREST DEALER, WRITE TIMELY CLOTHES, ROCHESTER 2, N. Y.

NEW! *This Gift Razor for Wives*

MEANS BETTER SHAVES FOR HUSBANDS

Here's the way to stop your wife from snitching your razor. Give her the new Eversharp Fashion Razor. It's designed for feminine shaving, and does the job infinitely better than your razor—or any other razor!

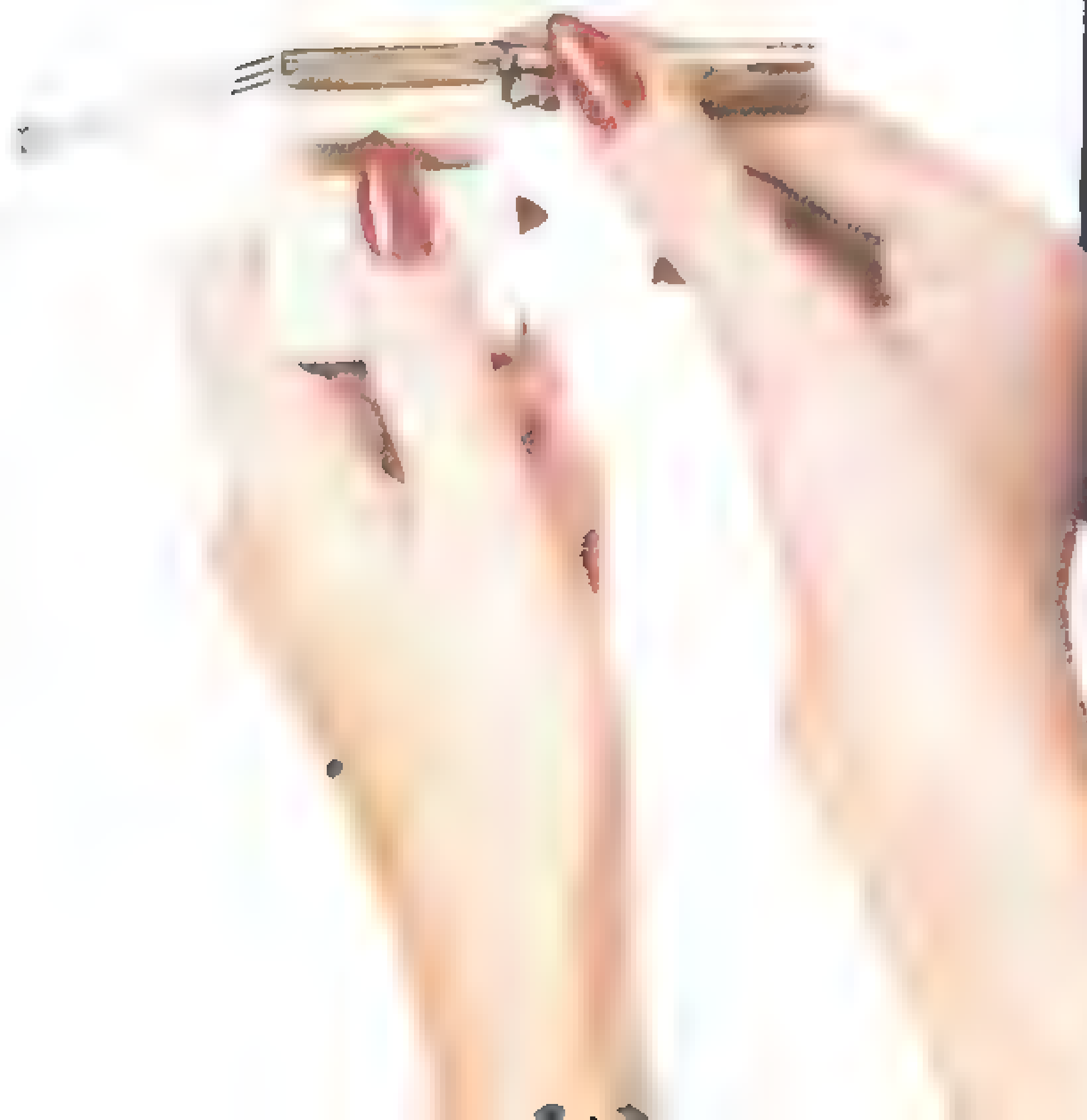
She'll be delighted with it the minute she sees it. It's small . . . compact . . . fits the palm of her hand . . . is light . . . and looks like a cosmetic.

The Fashion Razor is the only woman's razor with an Automatic Blade Changer.* Precision-built like every Eversharp-Schick Injector Razor . . . it's quick, clean, safe to handle—and hers **personally.**

Get one for her today . . . **you** will appreciate **your** gift to **her** as much as **she** will.

Ballerina-length Evening Costume by Hattie Carnegie

***CLICK-CLICK!** A push, a pull changes blades! The only woman's razor in the world with Automatic Blade Changer.



$3.95 with 10 blades, at fine stores everywhere.

P. S. For yourself, of course, there's the famous Eversharp-Schick Injector Razor for men. Tell her to give **that** to you!

new... dazzling

Fashion Razor

BY EVERSHARP SCHICK

LORD CALVERT
For Men of Distinction
LORD CALVERT
Blended
Season's Greetings
To a Man of Distinction
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THE COMPLIMENT NO OTHER GIFT CAN PAY...To your father, husband or friend, Lord Calvert means more than fine whiskey...it cordially expresses your esteem for him: "Season's Greetings to a Man of Distinction!" Now available in a luxurious holiday package, together with a special gift card...truly, the gift of distinction.

The Gift of Distinction...**LORD CALVERT**

LORD CALVERT IS A CUSTOM BLENDED WHISKEY, 86.8 PROOF, 65% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS. CALVERT DISTILLERS CORP., N.Y.C.

I didn't answer. I looked at him.

"We got it lox on bagal with cream cheese, the best. We got it coffee, the best . . ."

He broke off and he said, "Good morning, Joe," to the man in the cap who came in and opened his legs around a stool and looked at Fred Keats in the *Mirror*.

The fat old man came close to me and put an arm around my shoulder and he sniffed. "Well. I'll be . . . Not drunk. So maybe it's better you shouldn't eat. Your face ain't so good. It ain't healthy that crack should stay open so a trolley car could ride inside. You should better jump over to the hospital. Lox you can have later.

"Joe," the old man said. "You will take him?"

Joe backed off the stool and folded Fred Keats and put the paper in his back pocket. "I got a cab outside. Only I ain't working yet. I'll ride you flag-up. It'll cost you a fin."

"How far?"

"Not far. But I ain't had my coffee yet."

"Joe," the old man said. "You are a crook and a robber."

I said, "All right. Do me a favor first."

"What?"

"Look up the Square Deal Club. Ask for the Little Guy. If he isn't in, someone will take a message. Say that Maxie got hurt in the apartment downtown. Then hang up fast."

"Say, what is this?"

"It's a favor for a guy that's paying a fin for not far, flag-up."

"Okay. Got a nickel on you?"

Joe would be a rich man one day.

2

The pimply-faced lad behind the reception desk looked at the suitcase. "With that face *and* a bag? I don't get it. You emergency, or would you like a room and bath?"

"Emergency."

"What's the bag?"

"The bag was with me when I fell into the meat grinder."

"Oh. A funny guy. Sit down. I got to take some history."

I gave him some spontaneous history.

Suddenly, furiously, he began to bob up and down, and then to spin, and then he disappeared, fast, before I knew it, like an orange pit when you swallow one.

3

I awoke to an antiseptic odor, snores, grumbles and long lines of beds. I closed my eyes and I lay back comfortably; then I got up with a jerk.

"What time is it?" I asked the fellow next to me.

He opened his eyes and he looked at me pleasantly. He closed his eyes.

I asked the fellow on the other side.

"Quiet," he said.

"Doctor," I yelled. "Doctor, doctor."

"Shut up," the fellow said. "Quiet."

An orderly that needed a shave came over. "What's the matter with *you?*"

"What time is it?"

"Half-past seven."

"I want to get out of here."

"What do I care? I'll get the doc."

He came back with a tall clean young man with brown easy-smiling eyes. "How do you feel?" the doctor said.

"I feel good."

I did feel good.

"Is it all right, doc, if I get out of here? Two and a half hours is a short visit, but I've got things to do."

He smiled, touched my head and went to the chart at the foot of the bed. "Not so short." He looked at his wrist watch. "Precisely, your visit has been thirty-eight hours and thirty-five minutes. We gave you a good deal of sedative, but I don't believe that would account for it. You were tired, mister; overtired."

"What?"

He sat on the edge of the bed. "You may as well have your breakfast, breakfast in the evening. On the house. You may leave any time you wish."

I stretched my arms until my elbows crunched. "What the hell," I said. "Why not? Thanks." I swung my legs over the bed and let them hang.

"You're all right," the doctor said. "Three sutures up there on your left cheek. You'll leave it alone. Those stitches absorb. There will be a slight scar. What happened to you?"

"Brass knuckles."

"Oh."

"Doc."

"Yes?"

"You don't have a Max Crumb here?"

"Not that I know of."

"And my things? My suitcase?"

"Everything is in order."

"Thanks."

"Not at all."

I had orange juice and toast and an egg and coffee and the orderly helped me halfway to the shower and then I didn't need him any more. I felt fine. I took a shower and I looked in the mirror. My face was all right. The right side had a small bruise over the temple and a cut-scratch under the jaw. The left side, over the cheekbone, had a thin bulge covered with court plaster. Court plaster gets its name because in the old days the ladies of the court would stick tiny pieces on their faces to make them more beautiful. It didn't make me more beautiful. It didn't make me ugly either.

The boy brought my clothes and the bag and I signed a paper and I gave him a couple of dollars and then I got dressed and I went out into a cool evening and I called Madeline Howell from a cigar store. She wasn't in.

I took a cab to Fifty-ninth and Sixth.

4

I was glad to be home.

I locked the door and I bolted it and I set the bag down in the middle of the living room and I got out of my clothes and I perked up a pot of coffee and I drank it. I diddled with my face in front of a mirror and I shaved and I trimmed my mustache and I dressed in my new brown double-breasted flannel and an Oxford button-down with French cuffs and heavy brown shoes and an okra knit tie. I changed to a brown topcoat and a brown slant-down hat.

I was ready for nothing.

I picked up the heavy bag and I cursed at it fretfully and I locked the door behind me.

I rode down to the office and I slipped the cab guy a bill to wait for me. The night man took me up, grumblingly, bag and all. I found the big ring of little keys in the bottom drawer of Scoffol's desk. Viggy's Gladstone had two straps and three locks. I tried twenty-two of the little keys before I got the one that worked. It opened all three locks. I shut them and I clipped off the key and I put the jingling ring back into the desk and I let the night man take me down, grumblingly, bag and all. The cab guy took me back home.

I called Madeline Howell.

She wasn't in.

I opened the bag; it was one hell of a big bag, and the cover sprang back and I looked at tapestries, well-pressed, but puffing out with air, and they didn't mean a thing to me. I brought out a suitcase of my own and I filled it with tapestries; and there were lots of tapestries left. I have four suitcases. I packed the four of them before I ran out of tapestries. I looked at Viggy's bag in wonder and I shrugged. I don't know. Maybe I don't pack right.

I went out and pushed for the automatic elevator and I clicked the stop-dingus. I dragged my bags into the elevator and I went down to the ground floor. I clicked the stop-dingus again and I dragged them out and lined them up outside of Dr. Ben Silver's door. I unclicked the stop-dingus and went back and pushed Doc's button. The maid opened the door.

"Doc in?"

"Yes, sir."

I went in, with my bags.

Doc said, "Hello, Chambers."

"Stick these into a closet, will you, Doc?"

"What are they?"

"Suitcases."

"Oh."

He took two and I took two and we piled them into a closet amongst ladies' shoes and mules with fringes and slender shoe trees. "My wife's closet," Doc said. "She's in Florida."

"Business must be good."

"Good enough."

"Thanks, Doc. I'll be seeing you."

"Where'd you get the patch?" he said, thinly, professionally jealous.

"In a hospital."

"Oh."

"Emergency."

"That's different."

"By, Doc. Thanks. I'll see you."

I went back upstairs and I shut Viggy's bottomless satchel and I strapped it and I went out. I walked across to Third Avenue where, practically every other block, they were razing and they were building.

"You're my New Year resolution, Mr. Horst"

I caught up with a night watchman. "How do you do? Do you have sand?"

"Aye?" he said and straightened his hand behind his ear.

Trust Chambers to waylay a deaf watchman.

"Sand."

"Sand?"

"Right."

I took out a ten-dollar bill and I waved it. "Sand."

"What for?"

"For the satchel."

He took my ten-dollar bill. "Sorry, son, I don't hear so good. What I thought you said was sand for the satchel."

"Right," I said. "Sand for the satchel."

"Aye?"

"Sand. For the satchel."

"That's right. That's what I thought you said. What can I do for you, son?"

I beckoned to him with my finger. I bent over to his ear. "That's what I need. Sand for the satchel."

He backed away. He looked at me. He looked at the satchel. He pointed at it. I nodded.

He said, "Come on, sonny," and he led me across the planks under a scaffolding to where the sand pile was with a shovel. "Help yourself. What do you need it for? In the satchel."

"I'm building a house. A small one."

He didn't hear me and it didn't matter.

I shoveled sand into the satchel and patted it and then I saw a brick and I tossed it in. A brick in a false-stuffed suitcase is fitting, like the dollar to the bellboy when the lady is not your wife.

I filled it and I strapped it and I locked it and I threw the key into the sand pile and I said, "Thanks," and I walked the planks back to the sidewalk and now Viggy's Gladstone felt familiar; one side of me sagged and my arm was parting company with its socket.

I stopped and I called Madeline Howell.

She wasn't in.

A cab took me to Fiftieth Street between Broadway and Eighth and I checked the bag with the Greyhound Bus Lines.

I wasn't far from the Utopia.

Chapter XIII

I went up the narrow stairs and I knocked on OFFICE UTOPIA.

"Who knocks?"

"Pete Chambers."

"What the hell is this?" Denny shouted. "Vaudeville patter?"

Denny in grey plaid and a sober black tie, big and erect behind his desk, with an open bottle of Scotch and a tumbler.

"Solitary," I said, "for Scotch. You don't have a jane in the wastepaper basket, hiding out?"

"Nerves."

"Why?"

"Trying to run a dance hall with guys like you chopping up routine."

"I don't get it."

"First we have a drink." He came out from behind the desk, long as a check at the Stork, but wider, and he opened a cabinet and got a glass and poured.

I had a large drink of Scotch and I loved it.

"What's with chopped routine?"

"With chopped routine, it's Mona Crawford. She said she was sick so I let her go. Later, I heard different."

"Oh, that."

"That."

I gave him my glass and I looked at

Continued on page 120

it and he poured again and I had another large drink of Scotch and I loved it. I returned the glass. “Look, you're being a nice boy and free with your whisky, so I'll give you a tip. With chopped routine and Mona, you are liable to have your joint shot up one evening. Your Mona has a sweetheart *and* a boy friend. I don't know about the boy friend but the sweetheart is a guy called the Little Guy.”

“I know him. So what?”

“So that smells trouble.”

“How does Mona smell?”

“Mona smells like tramp.”

He swung. I ducked. I heard it whistle over me.

I brought up my head and I looked at him. “I think you meant that, and I'm sort of tired of ducking. So don't do it again. You're big, but I'm in the business. Run your dance hall.”

He poured into both glasses; he gave me mine and he held his out. We clinked.

He closed one eye at me. “I've probably had a drop too much for accuracy, and I'm glad or we'd be peeling ourselves off the walls. All right, I'm sorry. I don't like people calling my kids names.”

“I don't know. Maybe she isn't a tramp.”

He went back behind the desk and he put his feet up. He reached for the bottle, then he snapped his fingers and he sat back. “Oh. I've got a message for you.”

“You've got one thousand messages for me. All green.”

“Not now. Next week. I've got that thou out working for me.”

I shook my head, discouraged. “I come for money and I get a message. Who wants me?”

“Fat the Butcher.”

“Why?”

“How would I know?”

“Why would you have the message?”

“He's been dropping messages around like pigeons drop stuff in the park. All over. He's tried to get you at your office and he's tried to get you at home.”

“Fat the Butcher,” I said. “Probably jammed up with another redhead. I'm busy. If you see him, tell him I'll be in touch with him. When I have time.”

“I'll see him tonight. I'm taking the night off. I feel lucky.”

“With my thousand?”

“Have a drink.” He pointed at the bottle.

I had a drink. “Viggy doesn't like it.”

“What?”

“He doesn't like you as a patron.”

“Why? Because I get in on an oakley?”

“Because he thinks you're a lousy gambler.”

“The hell with him.”

“The hell with you. I'm going. I'm not coming back here for my thousand. Drop it at the office or bring it up to the apartment.”

“I wouldn't know where you live.”

“It's in the phone book.”

Phone book. I said, “Excuse me,” and I sat on the desk and dialed Madeline Howell's number.

Madeline was in.

“It's Pete,” I said. “Wait for me. I'm coming over.” I hung up. “Goodby, Denny. Thanks for the Scotch.”

I went to the depot and retrieved the bag from Greyhound.

2

She opened the door and she looked at the suitcase.

“Well,” she said. “Victory.”

“Pyrrhic.”

“Don't get dirty.”

“Pyrrhic victory.”

“Oh. I thought you were calling me a name. I don't understand.”

I set down the bag and I took off my hat and coat. She came up and she kissed me like it was a duty, and immediately she crouched and tried to open the bag. I let her. She opened the straps and she pried at the locks with her fingernails.

“Damn.”

“Curious?”

“That I am.”

“You don't know what's in it?” I suggested.

“Right you are, bucko.”

“How do you like that?”

She sat on a corner of the bag and she pulled her knees together and she turned on the glow for me. “How'd you do it, detective?”

“Now, now. I don't ask you about stool pigeons for the column. Now, do I?”

“And where'd you get the face?”

“How do I look?”

“Good. Better, in fact. Dashing. A patch and a gentle bruise, it does something to a good looking lad. A woman likes that. How's about it?”

She went, smilingly, to the day bed and patted a pillow.

“You're kidding,” I said.

“Try me.”

I sat down in the barrel chair. “About the Pyrrhic victory . . .”

“Yeh,” she said. “The Pyrrhic victory.”

“You're not getting the bag.”

“Aren't I?”

“Correct.”

She set a cigarette going and she sat on the couch and she crossed her legs, high. “Honeychile, you have a license issued by the Secretary of State and you have posted a ten-thousand-dollar bond. Did you ever eat a license and a ten-thousand-dollar bond?”

“Not yet.”

“Whet your appetite. I paid you a thousand dollars to do a job and you've gone and done it. That terminates it. Don't misunderstand me; I can like a chap very very much, but business is business. I can also kick a chap in the slats, if he's looking for it.”

I looked at her legs. “Madeline, I like you too. Which is why you don't get the bag. Will you kindly listen before I start chewing licenses and expensive bonds?”

“I'm always willing to listen.”

“I don't know whether you know what I'm going to tell you or whether you don't. If you do, then you'll know that I know too. If you don't, then you'll understand why I don't want you to have the bag.”

She bent over and she smothered her cigarette in a jade ash tray on an end table. “Right, bo. You've written your lead. Now go into the story.”

I sighed for her. Big. I rolled around in the barrel chair until I got comfortable. “I know J.J.O'S. The guy that owns the bag. It was stolen from him. There are three dead people mixed up with it. Murdered. Also some very hard gazabos, very much alive and very anxious. This thing could turn very messy. I wouldn't like you to be left with the short end of the stick.”

“Jesus breezes,” she murmured.

But she didn't talk.

Madeline Howell, criss-crossed in nylons, musing with the tip of an arched pinky in a corner of her mouth; smiling but not happy under her golden sidesaddle hair-fix. Suddenly, and stupidly, the hammers got going in my stomach.

She stood up, her elbows back, her arms graceful at her sides. “Suppose we eat? Do you have the time?”

“Thanks. Yes. Please.”

She went away and I smoked cigarettes and I marched the carpet and I kicked at chairs lightly and occasionally and I played with my mustache and I had a drink or two from the tall mahogany cabinet. She came back, rolling a wide serving table, and the hamburgers were thick and bulbous and the potatoes were Julienne and there was ketchup and beer and sliced onions and open biscuits yellow with butter—but I looked at Madeline and not at the food, and I wondered about that.

For me, that's something.

She had changed into a hostess gown, dusty rose and gold, with puff-shoulder sleeves and a tight gold sequin belt. It opened down from the middle in a long narrow artful inverted V, a peek-a-boo slit with flashes of smooth-sculptured leg—knee up and knee down—and flashes of absolutely nothing else, but absolutely; it kept you off balance, you wouldn't think it possible.

But it wasn't the gown.

The hammers had started before the gown.

Did I say something somewhere about a preference for ladies more corporeal, larger and less studied?

That's what I thought . . .

3

Then I pointed at my wrist watch and I said, “Look at the time.”

“What about it?”

“I'm a working man.”

“Hear.”

“The hell with that. Do you talk or do you clam?”

“I clam. If it means what I think it means.”

“You want your thousand back?”

“No.”

Then I had an idea. “Suppose I get the guy that owns the bag. Maybe there's something I'm not supposed to know about this setup. Suppose I have *him* come up here and have a talk with you. Maybe you two ought to sort of go into conference. Or, maybe, after he talks with you, you'll be convinced to pull your nose out of it and take back your thousand bucks; because, I'm hoping, it's a story you smelled out somewhere, and you sent me out on it like a leg man.”

“You're wrong.”

“Well?”

“Get your guy, if you like. I'm interested.”

I got up and I went to the telephone and I called Viggy's. Viggy wasn't there. I talked to Fat the Butcher.

“Where the hell *you* been?” he said.

“Where's Viggy?”

“I can't talk over the phone. I want you to come the hell up here.”

“You do?”

“Cut the stuff. Viggy's jammed. It's important.”

“Oh.”

“Where the hell you been for two days?”

“Vacationing. If that's all right with you.”

“Cut it out. He's jammed. Cops.”

“So that's the way it shapes.” I brought the receiver up and I smoothed at my hair. Then I brought it down. “Well, you're right and I'm wrong. I'm dumb. I'll be right up there.”

I hung up.

I went back to Madeline Howell. She kissed me on the forehead and I kissed her on the forehead. Then I lifted her and I held her and I kissed her on the mouth, good.

“I really hope you're not mixed up with this,” I said. “I can kick people in the slats, too. I mean people I like.”

She didn't answer.

“All right.” I patted the bag. “I hear it's supposed to be valuable. Stay with it. I'll be back as soon as I can.”

Chapter XIV

Have you ever been in a big-time gambling hole?

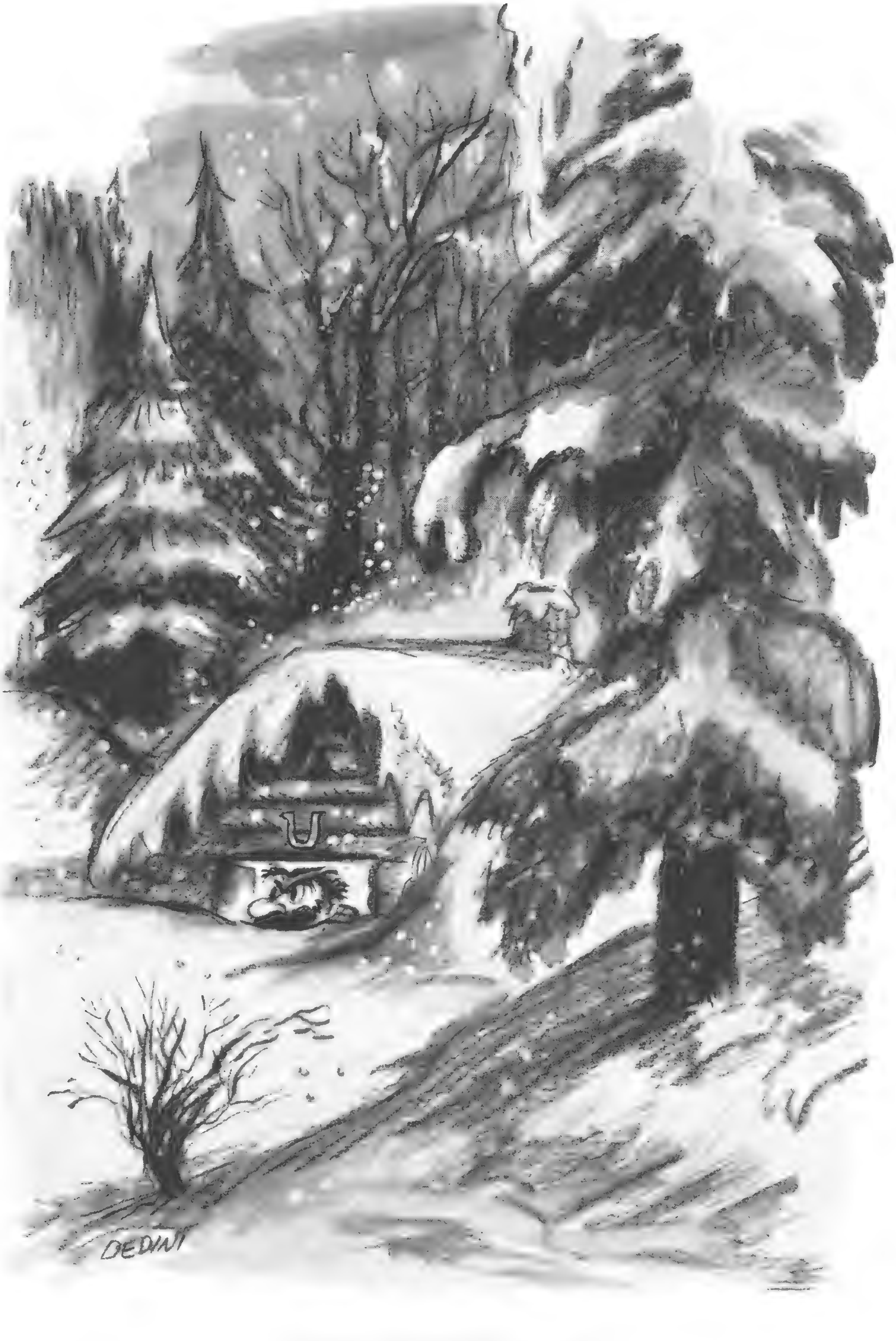
Viggy's is on Eighty-second Street and Park Avenue, a few doors from the corner. It is a small demure white building with shutters and a canopy. The canopy is royal blue and it says VIGGY'S in discreet soap-glass letters on each side. Under the canopy you walk up three steps and the front door is all mirror with a cool strip of fluorescent light on top. You push the pearl button and you listen to delicate chimes and you adjust your tie in the mirror and you fix your hat and you look at how your girl friend stacks up in her evening clothes—but the guy behind the bulletproof mirror sees all that too, only you cannot see him. The guy behind the mirror is Tutti-Fruiti Forgle, a tall Negro with fuzz-white hair, who knows his business. If Tutti (or his understudy) is in doubt there is a raised metal disc near his right foot; pressure on the disc rallies hurried gentlemen to resolve Tutti's doubt.

Once past Tutti, you check your hat in a quiet soft-lit anteroom. The soft-lit anteroom has four handsome tall-backed teakwood chairs, one in each corner, probably for seating the four smooth-jowled bulky gentlemen that inhabit the anteroom. You are subjected, with well-rehearsed apologies, to a fast and expert frisk and a peek into your lady's pocketbook. If you are burdened with artillery, you check that too, blushingly. Then you pay your hundred dollars and you are bowed into an elevator and one flight up you are ushered into the most lavish night club in New York City (reg-

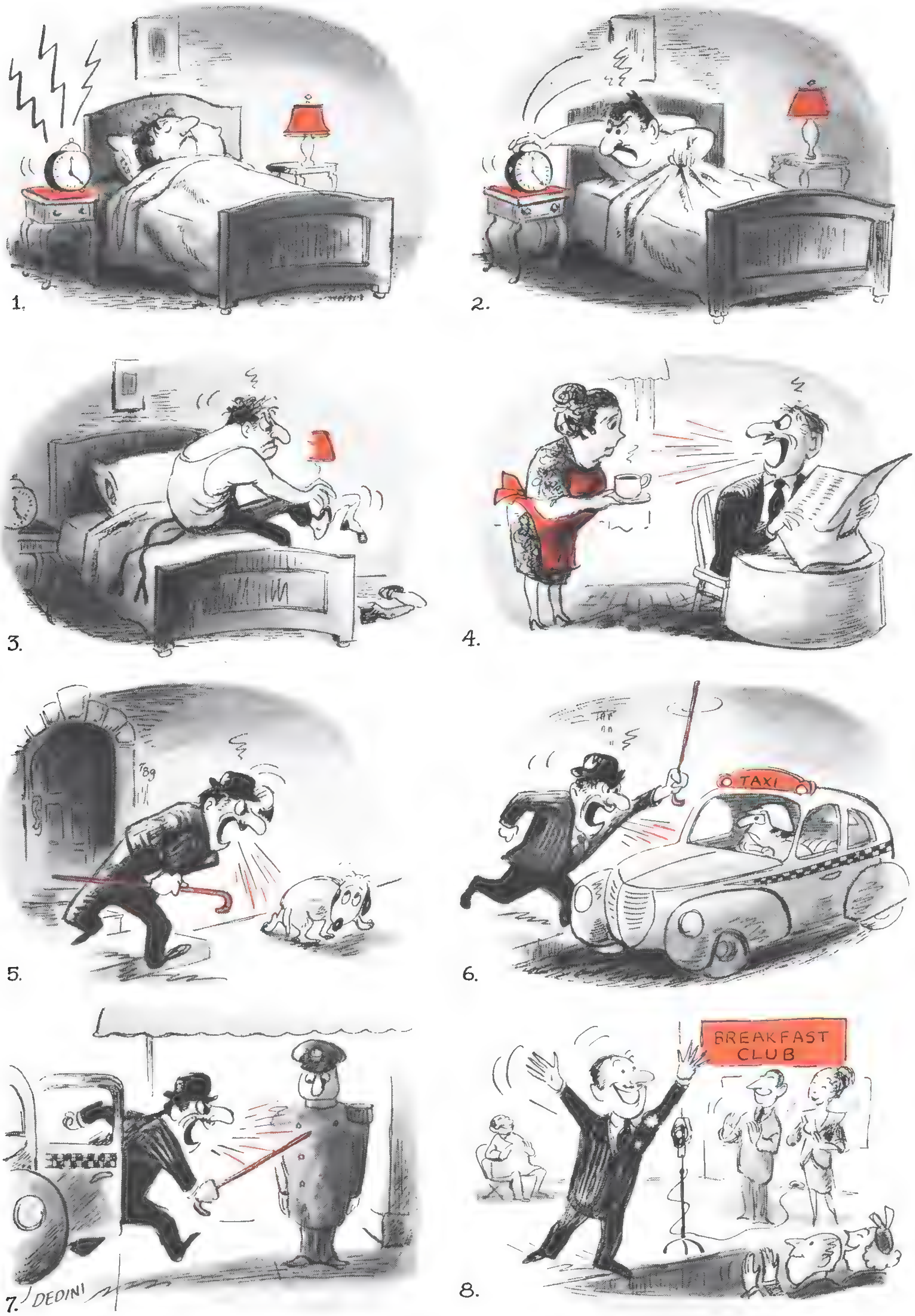
Continued on page 123

APARTMENT FOR RENT REASONABLE
McKAY

“Whoa!”



"Winter wonderland—nuts!"


1.
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BREAKFAST CLUB
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ularly redecorated by the top thinkers in the business). First there are tables and chairs set in carpets lush like moss and then there is the small smooth shining square of dance floor and then there is the great round drinking bar and set inside the bar, high up on a black velvet platform, are the boys with the music.

There is always happy noise and there is music and there are frequently circulating slim young men with bulges in their evening jackets. There are beautiful couples dancing on the dance floor and there is laughter and joy around the bar, and the best in drinks.

And the best in bartenders.

And the best in prices.

No drink is less than two dollars at the bar; fifty bucks for a bottle of Scotch set down plop in the middle of your table; but don't get me wrong, you have service and you have setups and you have colored ice cubes and you have a beautiful white tablecloth and you have indirect pinkish lights wrought by the latest and the greatest thinker-outers on the subject.

Downstairs, behind the anteroom, are the kitchens.

Upstairs, over the night club, there are three separate floors of gaming rooms: mostly dice and roulette and chemin de fer (and a few trick nonsense games), table after table: the screeching beautiful blondes with the latest hair styles and the combs and the sheen of the evening gowns, and the silent blondes; and the screeching brunettes with the latest hair styles and the lacquer and the click of the long earrings, and the silent brunettes; and the rich-sweet smell of the perfume, and the glint of the sweat, and the mingled smell of excitement and flesh, and the shoulders and arms and breasts and backs, from sick-white to glistening saffron; and the gentlemen at the serious games grunting unwillingly, with their ladies behind them or beside them, their teeth in their lips, jerkily silent—and all that unfolded folding money, the hundred-dollar bills, yards of it, flat and unwrinkled, the packages of the stuff that they hold in their hands, and, when they wander off for drinks or eats (the best in town), the way they slip it into their inside jacket pockets, narrow end up, like a letter from Mamma.

2

I pushed the pearl button and I waved at the mirror and Tutti opened the door and he said, "Good evening, Mr. Chambers," in the select awed voice that he reserved for everybody, and everybody thinks he's a secret glamour boy, exclusive and expensive.

I checked my hat and coat and I smiled at the smooth-jawed boys and I said, "First floor," to the elevator man.

The room was full of people.

I slid along the sides to the bar, and I was very much interested, because I saw Pierre Vyseuseau going with the horse-smile for a ponderous lady with bosom, and, not too far removed, Detective-lieutenant Parker, alone and sullen with a highball, and, across the bar from the detective-lieutenant—Dolores Castle.

I headed for Dolores.

Dolores Castle was Viggy's very latest special; a new employee at the club. I had seen Dolores just once before; she had been pointed out to me, but I had never met her, formally—leave that to Viggy. She did a few throaty torch numbers (when she had the time) and she did them exquisitely (I'd been told); a tall high-shouldered scintillant upswept blonde, cute as a dimple, button-nosed with etched nostrils and a bright mouth and delicate hollows under her cheekbones: statuesque, Junoesque, burlesque, but gorgeous.

I crawled up on the high stool behind her and the Mexican bartender whose name, believe me, was Pancho, looked up and said, "Ai, it is a pleasure and glahd to see you," and I said, very funny, "Agua, with rye on the side," and then I touched her, two fingers on a lovely shoulder and she turned, three quarters, one eyebrow up, and she said, ladylike and golden-voiced:

"Brush, guy."

"Brush?"

"Blow. Hoop with the roll. Powder. Like Seidlitz."

"Powder?" I said. "Like Seidlitz?"

She turned her back on me.

That wasn't bad either.

Her dress was no dress at all down to the hips, smooth as pitchman's patter.

In the monotone of a little girl reciting for company after the coaxing and the curtsy, I said: "My name is Peter Chambers and I thought yours might be Dolores Castle."

She swung around on the stool, smiling with the teeth and her blue eyes sprinkled lights like a kid's sparkler on the 4th of July.

"Peter Chambers?"

"Me."

"Oh." Giggle. "I'm sorry I was rude."

"Sure."

"You know how it is."

"Sure I know how it is."

"The characters have a drink and then they make like wolves."

"Sure."

"That wasn't ad lib. That was line. I really don't talk that way."

"You telling me?"

"I'm dreadfully sorry."

Pancho interrupted with rye and water.

"Drinkie?" Cute Chambers.

She had a voice that sort of reached in and put a hand on your heart, like a gypsy's fiddle when you are young and the night has stars. "I'd love to, but I can't, really. I go on in a very few minutes. How is it, Mr. Chambers, that we've never met. I've heard a lot about you."

"You figure it out."

"I don't understand."

"Skip it."

I poured in the rye and I followed it with water and I tapped the little glass against the shining counter and Pancho flung his happy Mexican personality about and looked at Miss Castle and he opened his black eyes at me and all of his face smiled around his large level teeth. He filled the little glass. I drank it.

I took her hand in both of mine. "Call me Pete. I mean call me Pete when you call me sometime. I mean it's in the phone book." I was really rolling good tonight. Like a humpbacked train on the living-room floor with the tracks put together, but bent.

Then she laughed and it was beautiful; she laughed and I loved it and a look crept into her eyes that puts perfection to an evening with smoke on the ceiling and a happy bartender and soft dreamy licks from an orchestra on a black velvet dais—if you don't have things on your mind.

"Now I understand." Her hand in both of mine wriggled delightfully. "Oh, that Viggy. And oh, oh, oh, how well he knows his friends . . ."

The music stopped and the clatter of announcement rolled off the drums and the man in tails held the microphone lovingly and told the people about the beauteous Dolores Castle who was coming on now to knock them dead.

"Got to go to work," she whispered. "Please don't go away." Pause. "Pete."

The way she said, "Pete"—the empty little glass went bang on the counter for Pancho.

3

Detective-lieutenant Parker amply filled the seat that she had vacated, amply and overlappingly.

"Rye," he said to Pancho. "How is it, Pete?"

"It's fine."

"Haven't seen you around."

"Haven't been around."

Detective-lieutenant Parker, squat, spread and bulky, like a stand-up keg of root beer.

"How's Viggy?"

"How would I know?"

His hand was thick and tight on my forearm, and uncomfortable. But this was Parker out of Homicide, so what's a black and blue, and the dreary remarks about look at the hickey and look where . . .

"I hope," he said, "your nose is clean."

Real roguish I said, "Yo no comprenday."

"Ha, ha," said Pancho the bartender.

"Blow," Parker said. "Give us four more in advance and blow. We're talking. And put it on his check."

"He don't get no check," Pancho said.

"You're telling me nothing," Parker said.

Pancho set up eight soldiers in front of us with a tall glass of soda for Parker and a tall glass of water for me.

"Four altogether," Parker said. "I didn't mean four each."

"Why you worry? On the house." Pancho moved away and he stuck his tongue out at Parker's back, and he winked at me, and he raised his right hand in a fist and chopped at his right forearm with his left hand in a meaningful gesture.

I winked back at him.

Then Parker puffed up with a bright idea.

"Skoal," he said.

"Skoal," I said.

Boom.

"Skoal," he said.

"Skoal," I said.

Boom.

"Skoal," he said.

"Skoal," I said.

Boom again.

Parker—working over the smart dick; Parker, of the well-known capacity; and Chambers, the smart dick, but stubborn.

"Algernon Hale," Parker said.

"That's my line."

"What?"

"Nothing."

"Algernon Hale. Charley Batesem. Sally Irvine. Dead and murdered."

"Yeah. I read about it."

"Where's Viggy?"

"Isn't he around?"

"Stop with the stuff. You and that Viggy . . ."

Pierre Vyseuseau came by.

"Ah. The dear Peter Chambers. How do you do?"

"Hi," I said.

"It is my pleasure. Extremely."

"Me too."

"And, ah," he said, "also the good and the dear lieutenant."

"Go fix your beard," Parker said.

"But *alors* . . ." He touched the beard and he presented the teeth, equinely. He wandered off.

Noddingly, and not liking it, Parker said: "So you know him too. You're doing all right. Skoal."

"Skoal."

Boom.

"Where's Viggy?"

"How the hell would I know?"

"Look. Algernon Hale, Charley Batesem, Sally—"

"I know. I know. Dead and murdered. Naked in a parked car by the river."

"Got you." He pushed a hard finger at my shoulder.

"Stop it, will you please. You're embarrassing me."

"Come on."

"Where?"

"Downtown."

"What for? What's the matter with you?"

"Complicity in murder."

"Man, you're nuts."

"Look," Parker said. "You wink at a gambling joint. You wink at a whorehouse. You wink at reefer boys. You wink at protection. You wink at policy. You wink at garbage rackets. *You do not wink at murder.* Nobody winks at murder. You're in trouble, fella. Let's go."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"You said naked in a car by the river."

"Sure. I read about it."

"You could have read about dead and you could have read about murdered. But you could not have read about naked."

"Why?"

"Because the papers don't know about the naked. See what I mean?"

I saw what he meant.

Chambers: the smart dick.

The smart dick stank. Net and gross.

Pancho, worry-eyed, moved up. "You wish more?"

"No," Parker said. "We're leaving."

"Ai," Pancho said. "More soda?"

He poured soda into Parker's glass, and, gracefully, he tipped it.

Into Parker's lap.

"Ai," he said expressively unhappy. "Ai, ai, ai."

Then he tipped the bottle and he dropped that too; so Parker had ice in his lap, and a glass, and bubble water and a bubbling bottle. He gasped, and he vacated the stool, slapping at his pants.

I ducked and I ran.

I ran for the stairs.

I didn't go down, I went up.

Up was the second floor and then up was the third floor and then up was the fourth floor. I opened a door into a long straight unadorned corridor, the end of which was a steel door that was Viggy's office. I sprinted up the slender corridor, and, sprinting, I remembered:

Pierre Vyseuseau had called me Peter Chambers.

Pierre Vyseuseau should have called me Barry Drumgoole.

Chapter XV

I tried the doorknob.

Then I knuckled the door.

Rapidly and with both fists.

Fat the Butcher said, "Hell, where's the fire?"

I shut the door behind me and I leaned on it. "Get on the phone. Call the checkroom. Tell them to put my hat and coat away. Somewhere. The girl knows me. I don't have a check."

Denny O'Shea, crinkle-eyed and rosy, unbuckled out of a green leather chair. "What's up?"

"He's charged," the Butcher said. "That's what's up."

"Tell them," I said. "If anyone asks, I left. In a hurry."

"Who's going to ask?"

"Parker's going to ask. Louis Parker, out of Homicide."

The Butcher moved. Silently and quickly. "Checkroom," he said to the phone. "Pete Chambers, Viggy's brain guy. Hurry up. Get his hat and coat out of there. Now." He waited. "Fine. Send it up here, the back way. If anybody wants to know, he left in a hell

Continued on page 124

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of a hurry. About two minutes ago. Ring me and tell me."

He dropped the phone and he narrowed down his eyes to black horizontal jelly beans and he gave me the one-two, toes to head and back. Then he went around the desk and sat in the thick-padded swivel chair, slumpingly, one small patent-leather shoe over a corner of the clean desk.

I leaned on the door and I sopped breath.

Emetically Denny said, "Dramatic," and he went back to the green leather easy chair.

"Shut up," I said, "or get up."

"Sure. Come and get it."

I came and I got it. One thousand dollars in one-hundred-dollar bills out of an inside-the-jacket alligator wallet.

"I win tonight. Because I'm a lousy gambler."

"What goes?" the Butcher said.

"I owe him . . ." Denny said.

"I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to him." Fat the Butcher was neither fat nor butcher; he was slim, small, fragile-boned and neat and he talked with muscular economy.

Enrico Fattibuccio readily degenerates to Fat the Butcher with the kids on the block on Mulberry Street and the kids grow up and you are Fat the Butcher until you die and what's the difference. He was Viggy's right hand in New York, general manager with a piece of the joint; bright as crystal and just as smooth, but harder; flat-voiced in monotone; lithe as a dancer in motion (in point of fact he had been a dancer years back, proud of his three weeks' turn at the Music Hall in high heels and tight pants). He was handsome as a movie actor; he looked quite like that guy, the small one, the one with the wooden lips and glitter-black eyes and the gloss-black hair.

"Oh," Denny said.

There was a tap on the door.

The Butcher said, "Who?"

"Valerie."

The Butcher looked at me. "Open it up."

"It's open," I said. "I just came in."

"It's shut. It's always shut from the outside, unless you got a key."

I turned the knob for a tall prettily pouted redhead with red-shining lips. She brought my hat and coat. She said, "Oh, Mr. Butcher."

"Oh, Miss Valerie," he mimicked.

"No. I mean a man came a few seconds after you called. I had just removed the hat and coat. A stocky dark man with black hair and very angry. He asked me if I knew Mr. Chambers and had I seen him. I told him I did and I had, and that he blew out a few minutes before in a gosh-awful hurry."

"What about him?" the Butcher asked. "Where is he?"

"He took his things and he left. In a hurry too."

"Natch," I said.

"Right, beautiful," the Butcher said. "Thanks." To me, he said: "Now, what?"

"Now I get D D D on my report card and I get four plus on my Wassermann and I get flunked out of my profession and I get canceled out on my bond. That's all. Unless."

"A very funny guy we got here," the Butcher said, mirthlessly.

"Unless what?" Denny said.

The Butcher swiveled his head around. "Denny, you will please excuse us. I got things to discuss around with this guy."

"A pleasure." Denny stood up and he touched the redhead's arm. "Come on, sexy, I'll buy you a drink."

"Can't."

"Why?"

"I'm not allowed."

"Why?"

"I check hats."

"Not now you're not checking hats." She looked at Fat the Butcher.

"No," the Butcher said. "If you know what I mean."

"Yes, sir," the girl said.

"You and your goddam redheads," Denny said.

He opened the door for her and let her pass. "How'd you ever get the job here?" I heard him inquire. "Enrico," she said. "Oh, he doesn't like it when I call him Enrico, only when we're . . ."

The door shut.

"Mama mia . . ." The Butcher's voice disappeared while he bent over and opened a low refrigerated liquor closet behind him. He produced a bottle of soda, a bottle of sherry and a twelve ounce glass. "Sherry and soda. What'll you have?"

"Soda water."

He brought up another glass. I poured some of the soda and I took it to Denny's green chair and I sipped some and I sat the glass down on the carpet alongside the chair. The Butcher brewed his sherry and soda, sipped. "What's with Parker?"

"He opened his mouth and I put my big foot in it."

"Oh. *He* opened his mouth."

I drank soda.

"What about?" he said.

"What?"

"What about are you jammed? Same as Viggy?"

"How would *you* know?"

"I know all about why Viggy's jammed."

"Before or after."

"Before *and* after."

I pummeled, flat-hand, for cigarettes. "Could it be you had a finger in it?"

I found the pack and it was empty. I made a ball of it and I got up and went around and I pushed his knee and I threw it in his wastepaper basket. His hand circled my wrist as I came up. Unaffectionately. I twisted a look up at him.

Squinting, he looked down at me. "Don't make with the smart remarks."

I pulled up and he let go my wrist. I went back to my green chair. He opened a plastic cigarette box and he tossed me a fresh pack. I pulled the tape and cut the head off the top and ripped a corner with my teeth and took a cigarette and lit it and tossed the pack back, sliding along the desk.

"Enlighten me, brother Butcher."

"There's that tapestry stuff and the three cantaloupes in the car and Viggy's lammed up because you're his smart-pants operator. Now don't start skipping rope with me or I hit you on the head with the bottle. I don't mix with any of the extra stuff. I am sitting here pretty like a prince. I make a living. So don't crack any more."

Real detectivelike I said, "Well, a guy can ask."

"All right. You asked and you got answered. Now, first, where you been the last couple days? I'm asking for Viggy."

I puffed on my cigarette and I drank my soda water.

"Working."

"On what?"

"On Viggy's matter."

"Yes, you were. Sleeping out with a tomato, more likely."

"Viggy," I said, "is jammed because a guy named Ralph March put the hot end of a cigarette against the balloon. So they identified Algernon Hale at once, and this Ralph spills all about how Viggy came in with Algy and Charlie from the West, and Viggy has suddenly got hot water all around him up to the neck. How do I know?"

The Butcher smiled. More softly he said, "How?"

"Because I'm working on it. How

did Viggy know?"

"He got tipped. From downtown."

"So Viggy knows Parker will be around to talk to him and Viggy can't figure an out (neither can I) so, naturally, he lams, which is very smart."

"Right."

"Where is he?"

"He's holed up with Marmaduke. Down there on Lex. He sent out word only once. To contact you."

I brought the stump of the cigarette to an ash tray on the desk, and I sighed and I looked around the room. It was a nice big room with a green carpet on the floor and green drapes over the windows and a big square desk and comfortable leather chairs and nothing else, except the one wall that was all safe, like the entrance to a vault: sturdy dull-glow metal bars and visible locks and the thing with the prongs up front that looks like a mariner's wheel. Very impressive.

"Now what about you?" the Butcher asked.

"Briefly, you could say I'm on the lam too. From now on."

"Why?"

"Because I'm a dunce."

"Oh."

"You know how it is. Everybody is a dunce sometimes."

"Same thing?"

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning this Viggy trick with the tapestries."

"Same thing," I said, sorrowfully.

Fat the Butcher took his leg off the desk and came out and sat in a green chair opposite me and spread his knees and rested his elbows and clasped his hands.

Dreamily he said, "Viggy on Lexington Avenue and you on the duck. What you call a nice clean situation."

"Yeah."

"You'll keep in touch?"

"How are you fixed for tapped wires?"

"I wouldn't know."

"How do you contact Viggy?"

"There's a bartender in the neighborhood that I know down there. I call him—from a phone booth—and he drops in on Marmaduke. Then later on, I call him again, if there's any message for me."

I got up and I slapped a hand along the metal bars. "All right. Here's the way I'll work it. I'll slip into Denny's Utopia if I have anything important, and Denny'll come up here and tell you, and you'll get in touch with your bartender and your bartender will contact Viggy. Roundabout but safe. No phone calls through here. Check?"

"Check. Let's tell Denny he's a messenger boy."

He drank the rest of his sherry and soda and he phoned down to the bar. "Pancho? Mr. O'Shea's brother. Tell him to come on up."

Denny came back and Fat the Butcher gave us each a cigarette like daddy doling out lollipops. He lit them for us and he blew the match out. "Denny," he said, "I would like a favor."

Denny towered over him, handsome and smiling-eyed. "You didn't do me any favors with that redheaded dame with the sultry mouth."

"This is another kind of a favor."

"We ought to trade favors. I like to trade."

"Some other time. This one you're doing for your brother. Viggy's holed up for a while, trouble around the town. Brains over here got himself caught with his *tuchus* in a barrel, so he's scarce till he gets himself unwrapped. Only he's working on a thing for your brother. So, just in case he stays clear of the can, he might want to report. He just mentioned that maybe the law's got an ear on the wires. Could be. So we want a favor."

"How's about the trade?" Denny said.

Preoccupied, the Butcher said, "What trade?"

"The redhead. I go for her."

"You wouldn't like me to throw you the hell out of here?"

"You and who else?"

"Now, now, boys," I said.

Denny said, "Who the hell does he think he is?"

"I know who you are," the Butcher said. "You're Viggy's brother. Period. Outside of that you're a large hunk of nothing."

Denny reached out and spoiled the Butcher's stiff white collar and drew him over. The Butcher raised his knee sharply and Denny grunted and angled holding his groin. The Butcher smiled, side-mouthed; then Denny moved in a football rush, head down. The Butcher sat on the carpet, panting.

I got between them.

I shoved Denny into a chair.

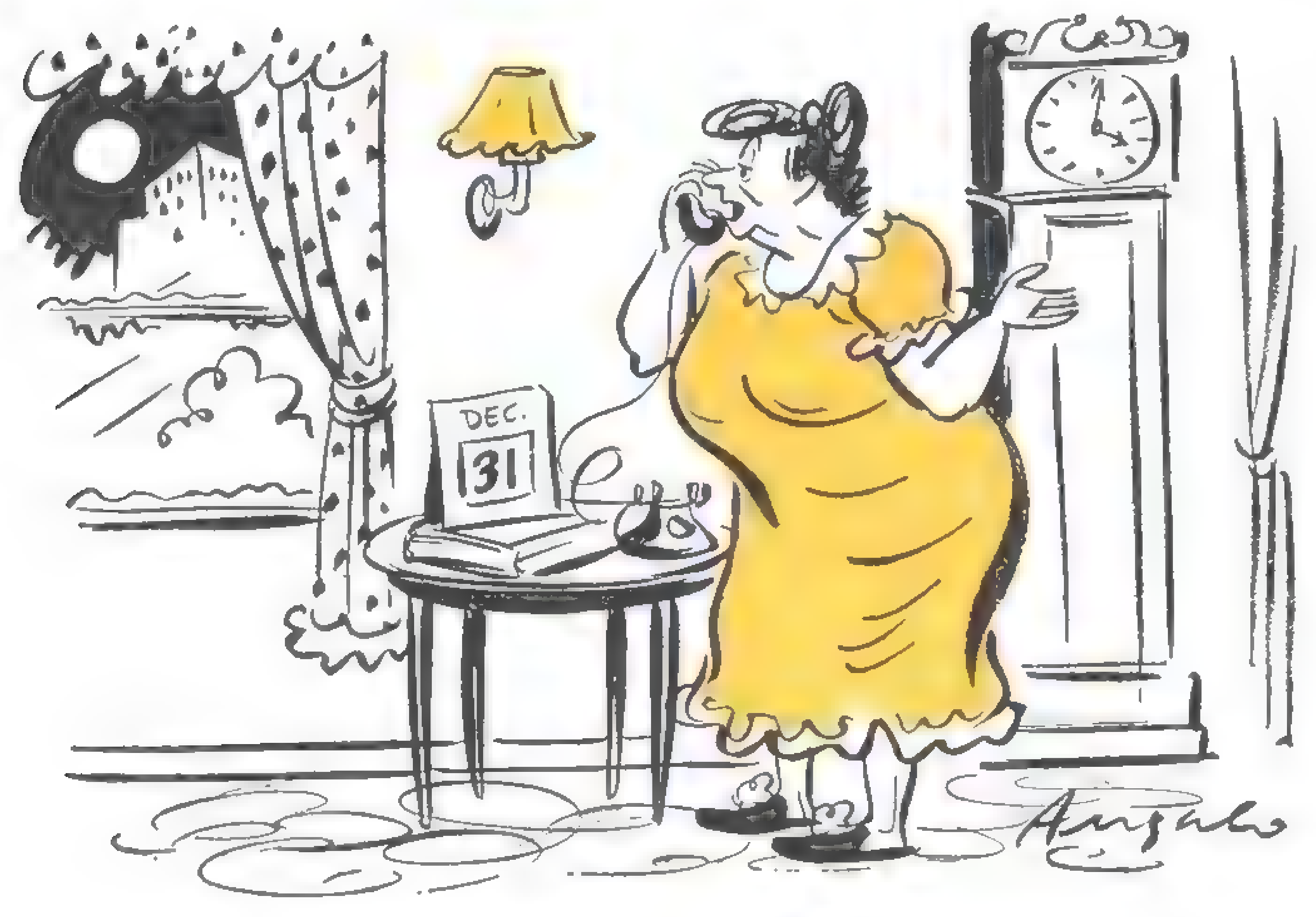
I said, "What the hell were you drinking downstairs? Singapore slings? With vodka?"

The Butcher stood up and dusted at his pants; he had a round red spot in each cheek and his lips were tighter than a show-girl's society boy. He looked at Denny and he looked at me, then he shrugged and adjusted his collar and bounced up and sat on a corner of the desk and he clumped his heels rhythmically, like a boy on a fence.

"That's the way it is." He rolled his tongue around in his mouth. "Guys have to have brothers."

I looked at Denny. "What's the matter with you? What's special about that redhead?"

Continued on page 126



"Well, John finally came in—he and two stop signs, a duck, a fire hydrant, six horseshoes and a midget called Harry"

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"A dime a dozen."

"So what's all the soapboxing about?"

"Nothing. I was kidding the guy."

"So why'd you reach for him?"

"That's different. I didn't like the way he talked to me."

Didactically the Butcher said, "Sensitive. All guys' brothers are sensitive."

"That's enough," I said.

"I wish he wasn't his brother. I'd put ribbons on his face."

"Anytime," Denny said.

"That's enough," I said. "Tell him."

"You tell him." The Butcher got off the desk and made himself more sherry and soda.

"It's like this," I said. "I don't know if it will be necessary, but while I'm dodging cops, I might want to get word through to Viggy. I don't want to call here because it might be that the wires are tapped. So what I'll do is get into your Utopia, tell you, and then you come up here in person and tell the Butcher. Then the Butcher can get it through to Viggy. As I say, it might not be necessary, but we may as well have it arranged. Okay?"

"Why not?"

"That's the way I like to hear you talk. Now if you two are finished playing bouncy ball, I'm getting out of here."

"Sure," said Denny.

"Sure," said the Butcher.

"Fine," I said. "Stop the killer-diller with other guys' girls."

"Hell. You know I was kidding."

I took my hat and coat. "Okay?" I asked of the Butcher.

"Sure. Okay. I'm sorry I lost my head."

"Me too," Denny said. "How's about some sherry, Fat? Without mickey."

"No mickey." The Butcher grinned.

"So," I said, "on this happy note of harmony—I leave."

"Just a minute," the Butcher said. "I'll call down to Mushky. You'll go down through the stairs and he'll meet you on the ground floor and he'll work you out through the disaster exit. That'll leave you around the corner, a block away from here."

"No, thanks. No disaster exit."

Aggrieved, the Butcher said, "Why?"

"It's undignified."

Wrinkles curled over his eyebrows. "Oh. Undignified."

I took the sherry he had poured for Denny and I drank some. "Look, pally. If you've got a disaster exit, dear Parker knows about it. Cops are cops and cops are smart and anybody who doesn't think so, they just aren't smart themselves. I don't think that Parker thinks that I'm still here, but even if he did, he'd let it go at that. I'm sure he doesn't think I murdered anybody; he knows me too well. But he does think I know something about it and he'd damn well love it if we had a chat. So he puts a couple of boys outside my office, mostly for appearances, and he waits for me to call him up, which, one of these days, I shall probably do. But in case I'm all wrong, then Parker would have his strong young men congregate at *all* your exits, and I wouldn't like someone smirking a 'Hello, Petie' at me sneaking out through an alley. It just wouldn't be dignified. Follow?"

"Follow," said the Butcher.

"So I'll be seeing you."

I opened the door and I shut it.

Tight and neat and close and quick—but not behind me.

In front of me.

Chapter XVI

Crying-towel Reed in undisputed possession of a corridor in Viggy's was as alarmingly improbable as an amiable atheist in sole control of a bishopric—but if it wasn't Crying-towel Reed, vague but startling, lounging against the wall outside the office, then I wasn't an excited detective, pawing a door, uttering stuttering sounds like young romance in the bathroom with his finger in his throat.

"Get calm," the Butcher said.

"What's the matter?" Denny said.

"You look like you seen an illusion," the Butcher said.

"*Illusion?*" I said, amazedly.

The Butcher grinned. "It's because I don't believe in ghosts."

"Outside there, brother, it is either an illusion leaning up against the side of the corridor. Or it is a guy whose name is Crying-towel Reed."

Fat the Butcher kissed the grin good-by.

"You are crazy. In the head."

"Try me, sweetheart."

The Butcher opened a drawer with assorted guns.

He gave one to Denny and he gave one to me and he took one for himself. In a close phalanx of fire power we moved up on the door.

"Open it, Denny," the Butcher said.

Denny opened it.

Crying-towel Reed was holding up the wall with his right shoulder and with his right hand he was menacing his mouth with a broken toothpick.

Emphatically the Butcher said, "I'm an s.o.b."

"Who says no?" asked Crying-towel Reed.

"Inside, catastrophe." The Butcher called him with the gun.

Three men with revolvers like siege guns, and Crying-towel Reed, shapeless as a played-with paper clip, casually slouching in the middle of the green carpet. I put mine back in the drawer.

"Touch me," Cry said.

I touched him. All over. He was smooth.

"I am here on a mission of peace," he announced.

"What the hell kind of a mission," the Butcher said, "of peace are you here on? And why are you on it here?"

Crying-towel pointed with his thumb. "Him."

"Me?" I said.

"You."

"Me?"

"The boss wants to see you."

"Boss, huh?"

"Yeah."

"I thought you didn't have a boss."

"Right now I got a boss. Piecework."

"Just one little minute," the Butcher said. "How the hell did you get in here in the first place?"

Cry shifted the toothpick. "I will tell you; so you will worry. I am out looking for your shamus friend and I got some lines out. So there's a guy I know works in this clip-coop. So there's fifty in it for him if he tips me when the tin-badge shows. So he shows. So he tips me. Downstairs you got kitchens with garbage-outs and you got chefs that don't mind a quick buck and I know how to shmear. So I am here, strictly on a visit."

The Butcher made eyes at me. "You don't have to go, bo. We can work this guy over a little bit and send him back to his boss with a veal cutlet for a face. Because he don't belong here. And his boss knows it. Piecework or straight salary."

Cry spat the wood out of his mouth. "I come on a mission of peace," he insisted, "but outside in a nice shiny car I got five boys. If I don't show in an hour, they got pineapples. What you peel with your teeth and you throw."

"*You* could get killed like that," the Butcher said.

"Me? The hell with that. I'm what you call a fatalist."

"Look, tuberculosis," the Butcher said. "You are dumb. You talk too much. We can hold you here and we

Continued on page 131

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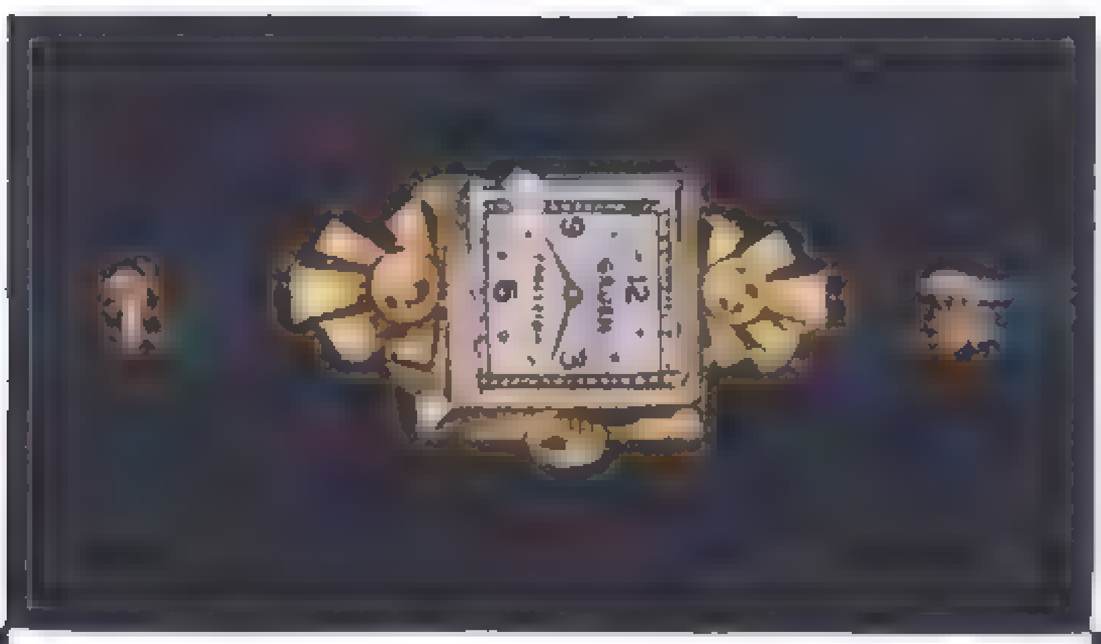

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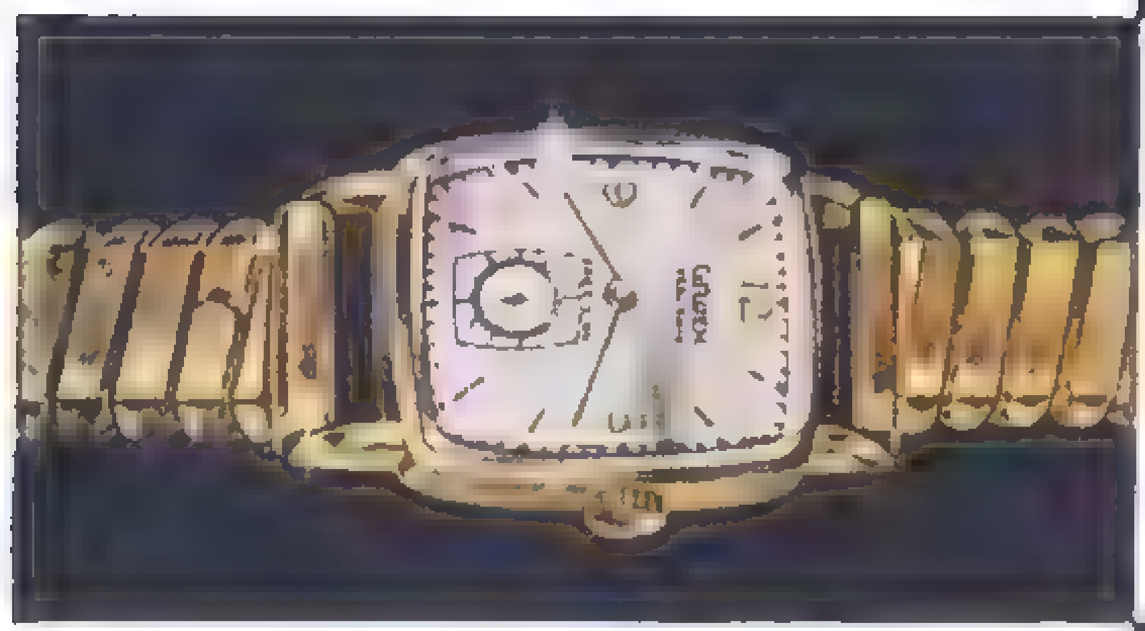

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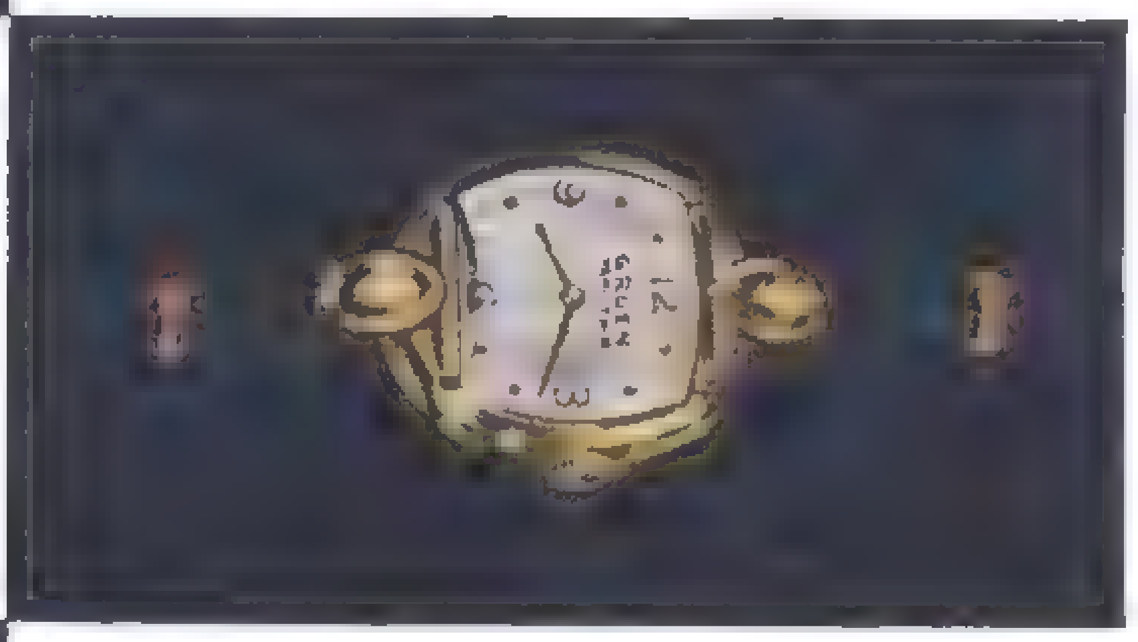

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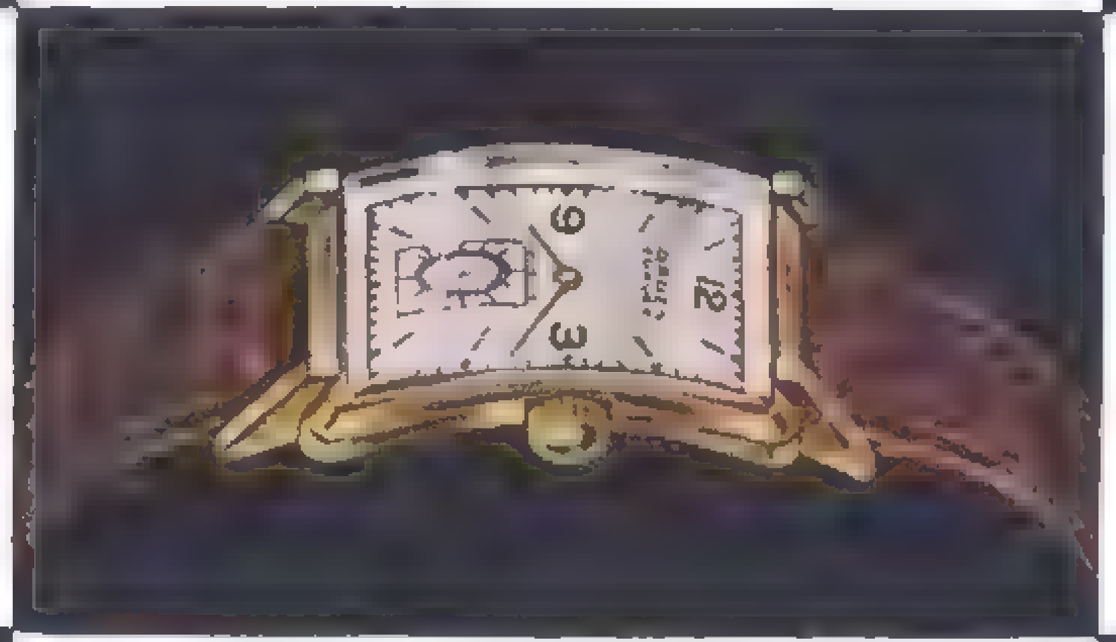

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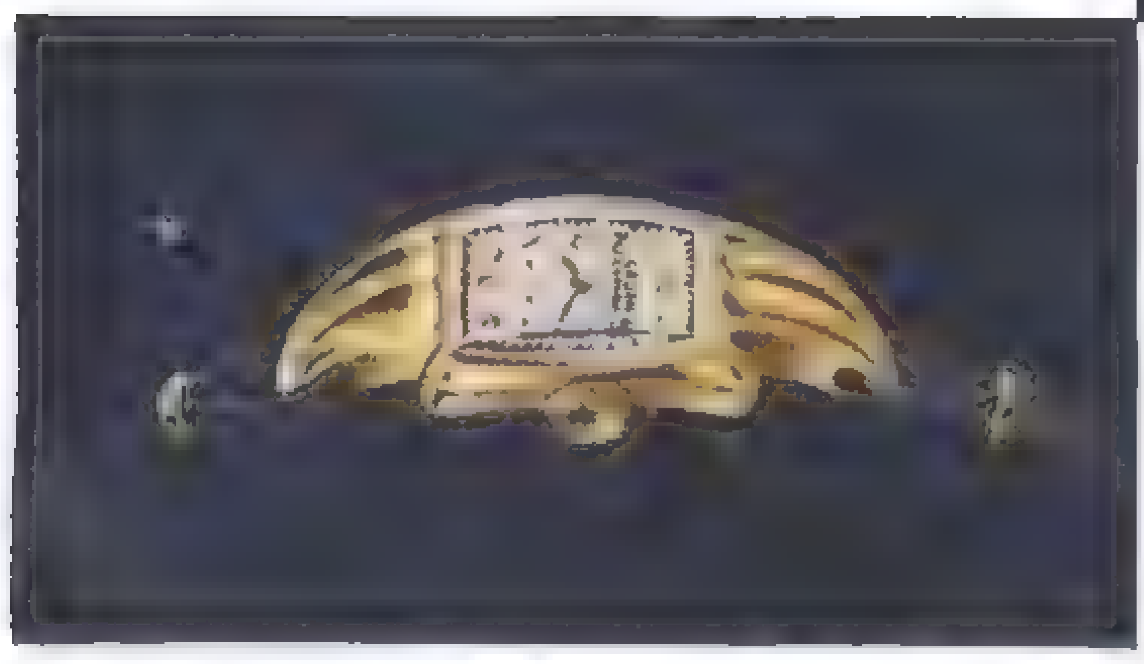

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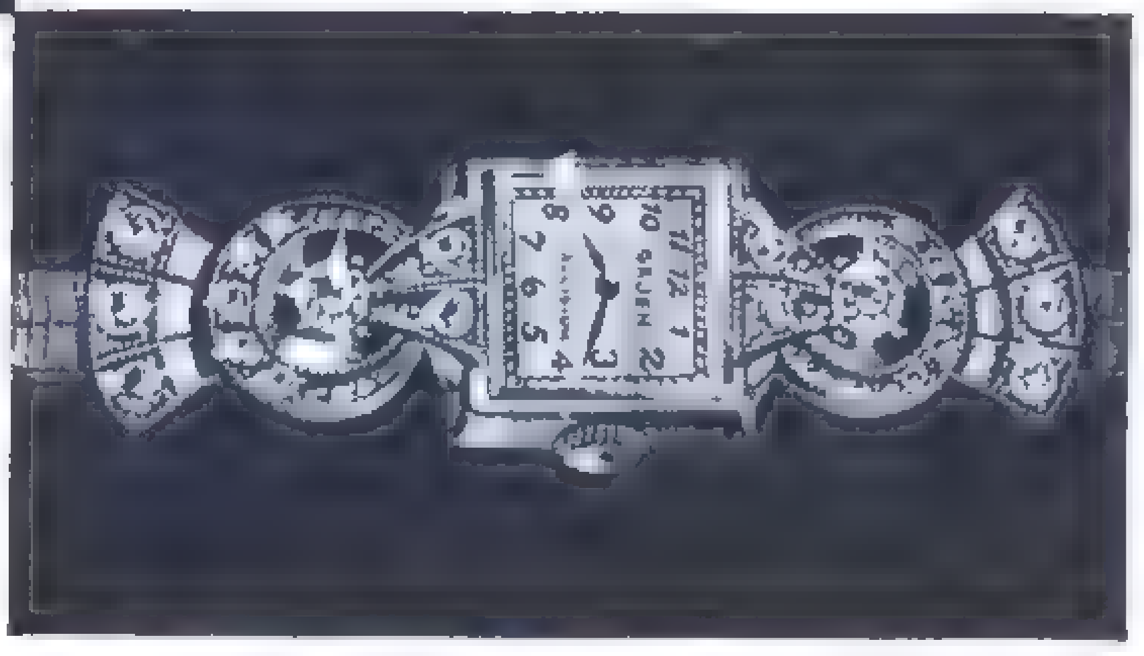

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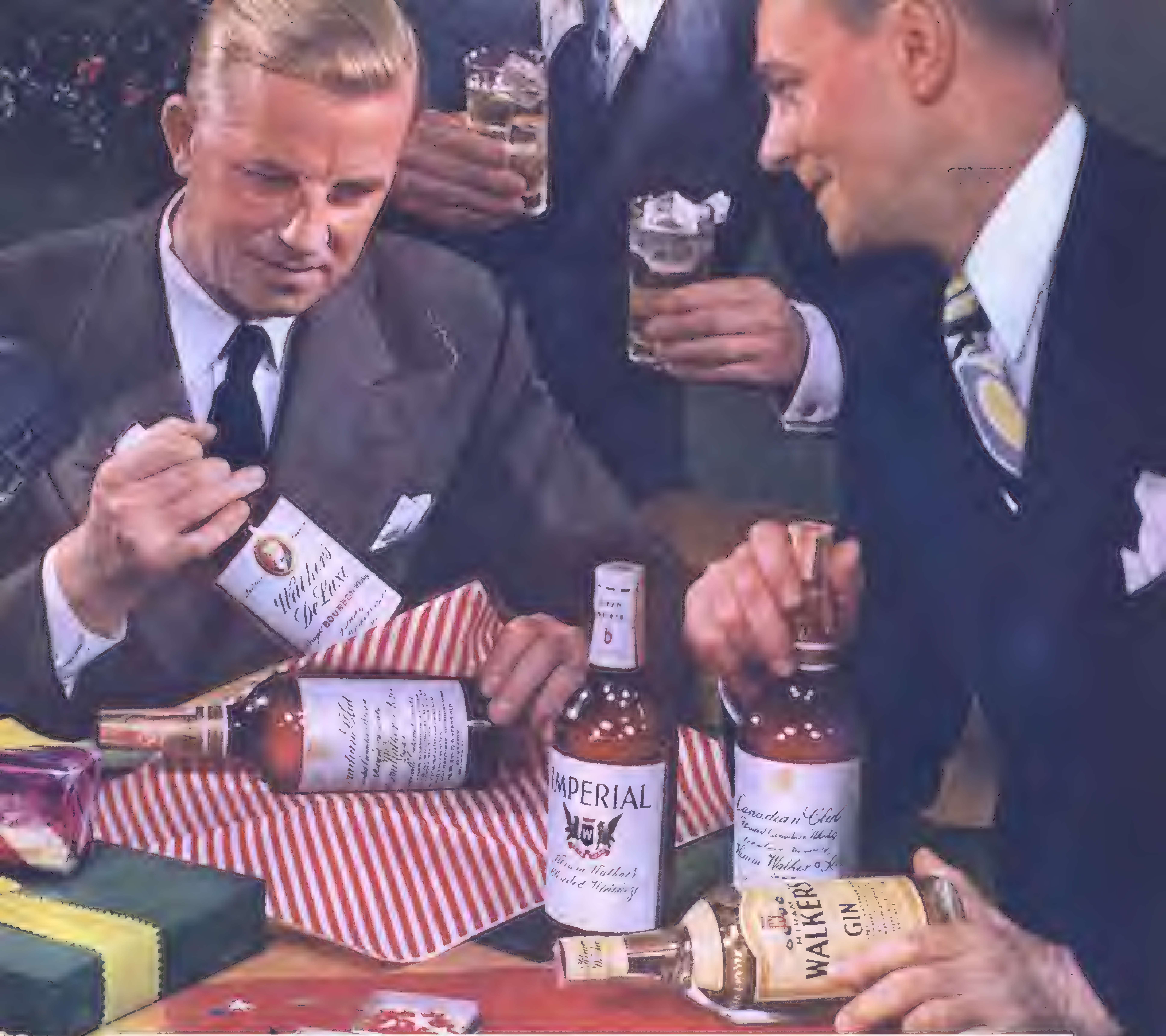
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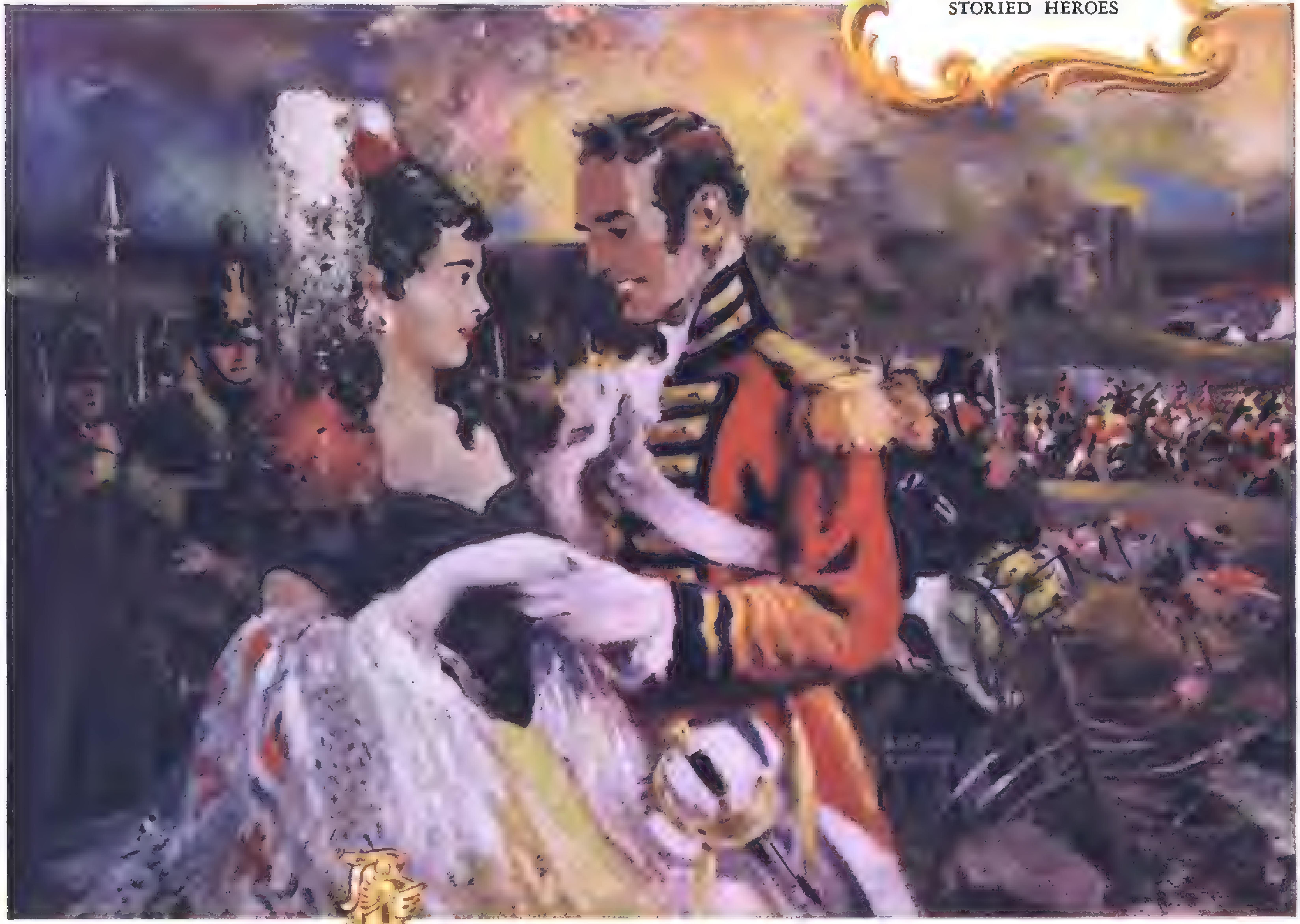

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can go out and take care of the boys in the shiny car. Then what?"

Dryly Cry said, "Not dumb. Because I got more boys staked out with more instructions." He came up to Fat the Butcher and he pushed the unpoised gun aside and he laid a finger on the Butcher's flat white shirt. "Don't fiddle with Cry. I'm a high-paid man, and when they give me time, I do a job perfect." Then he came to me, winked, patted my arm. "You, professor. If the boss wanted you feet first, you would be feet first, or at least you'd have damn well known we made a stab at it. I certainly would not be here batting the breeze with this dressed-up monkey. Now, you coming, or do we take you? Later on."

Denny said: "Look, pal. If this joint gets blown up, guess what happens to the Little Guy's flophouse. And that's all he's got. One single sucker trap."

"Bet your boots," Cry said sadly. "Correct and you are right, longie. It ain't good business, and nobody would like me. Which is what I say in the beginning. Peace, like that Father Divine with the Angels."

The Butcher made his deposit of gun in the open drawer and he went wearily into his swivel chair. He poured and he drank sherry neat and then he put his feet up on his favorite corner of the desk. "Well?"

"I'm going," I said. "I'm very happy to go."

Cry said, "Smart. You're a guy I like."

"You could get hurt," the Butcher said.

"I don't think so."

"I don't get it."

"It's like this. The Little Guy thinks I stole something from him, and he'd like it if I told him where it is. I couldn't talk much with a broken jaw, or worse. Now, could I?"

"Well . . ."

"Could I?"

"You could write."

"Don't get literal."

"Not me. I don't read books." He sighed, dissidently. "I hope you know what you're doing. You want a few boys?"

"Suits me," Cry said. "I don't care. That's the Little Guy's business. As long as I deliver the professor. Nobody told me nothing about no company."

"Me," Denny said. "I'm just the guy."

He laid the gun on its side on the desk.

"How's that?" the Butcher inquired.

"You're going to like this reason."

"That I am sure of."

"It's because I'm the big-shot's brother. So I'll be my brother's keeper. That is, I'll keep my eye on the guy he keeps. So I'll be doing Viggy a favor, and I don't figure to get hurt because the Little Guy don't figure to damage Viggy's brother. Likee?"

Crying-towel Reed lit a cigarette. Denny O'Shea lit a cigarette. I looked at the Butcher and he threw the pack at me and I caught it and he said, "Keep it, for Chrissake," and I brought him a cigarette and he lit mine and he lit his own. Everybody smoked and nobody said anything.

Then the Butcher said, "All right?"

"Good by me," I said.

"Good by me too," Cry said.

The Butcher fluttered his hands. "Then why the hell shouldn't it be good by me too? Okay. Get out of here. All of you."

I took my hat in my hand and I put my coat over my arm and Cry opened the door and he said, "Pray view, Professor Alphonse," and Denny and I went through and he came after us. In the corridor I inquired, "How's Max Crumb?"

Cry squeezed and brought up a thin smile that hung on his face like a harelip. "Crumb? I never heard of the guy."

2

We went by way of the stairs and we stopped at each floor while I looked over the gaming rooms. I was guest of honor and that's the way I wanted it. I was looking for Dolores Castle which is like looking for little Willie in a white shirt in the bleachers at the Yankee Stadium on a doubleheader Sunday.

Sometimes you find him.

I found her, thighs against a dice table on the second floor; and she saw me and she squealed, partly at me, mostly at the portly man with the montewoolley beard who bounced a ten off the board the hard way. She gathered in her money and made herself narrow, backing out of the crowd.

"Whew," she said. "Two fives. And me with fifty that he makes his point. And ten extra for the hard way."

"Very lucky. And very beautiful. I came through to say good-by and glad to know you."

She looked at Crying-towel Reed and Denny. "Hello, Denny."

"Hello, Dolores."

Her eyes scraped over Crying-towel's bleak face and she touched my elbow and she said, "Excuse me," and we moved away a few inches.

"Trouble?"

"No."

"I've been looking for you too."

"Swell."

"I like you."

"I like you too, sister."

"Don't call me sister."

"Sure thing."

"I saw that commotion down there. With the cop. Parker."

"Yeah."

"He asked me about you."

"Yeah?"

"I told him you'd beat it. I told him I saw you taking the elevator down."

"Thanks, precious."

"But I didn't. I saw you taking the stairs. Up."

"Of course. You're a sweetheart."

"Now what about this guy?"

"Which guy?"

"This little guy that looks like he's looped. The guy with the nothing-face."

"Just a guy."

"Don't go away," she said. "I'll be right back."

Rescue I did not want.

I hoped, fervently, that Dolores Castle wasn't going noble on me. I was looking forward to Dolores Castle, but not noble. I said, "In a minute," to the boys, lightly and deprecatingly; and then she was back and she shook hands with me and she said good-by and she left a stiff little card with me, in my hand.

On the way out, in the men's room, I looked at it.

It was a bright yellow card with her name and address and phone number on one side. On the other side it said: "You're a cutie-pie. Call me when you have the time."

I put it in my wallet.

Chapter XVII

Up around One Hundred and Eightieth Street the George Washington Bridge is majestic over the Hudson at fifty cents a crack toll charge. On the Jersey side, there's the Riviera, with a roll-top ceiling, where you can dance and drink and study astronomy and listen to the music and clap hands for the talent. Over on the New York end, in Washington Heights, there's the Square Deal Club, a three story brownstone, where you can dance and drink and study bird-cage and listen to the dice rap against the rubber backboards on the pool tables. That's the Little

Continued on page 132

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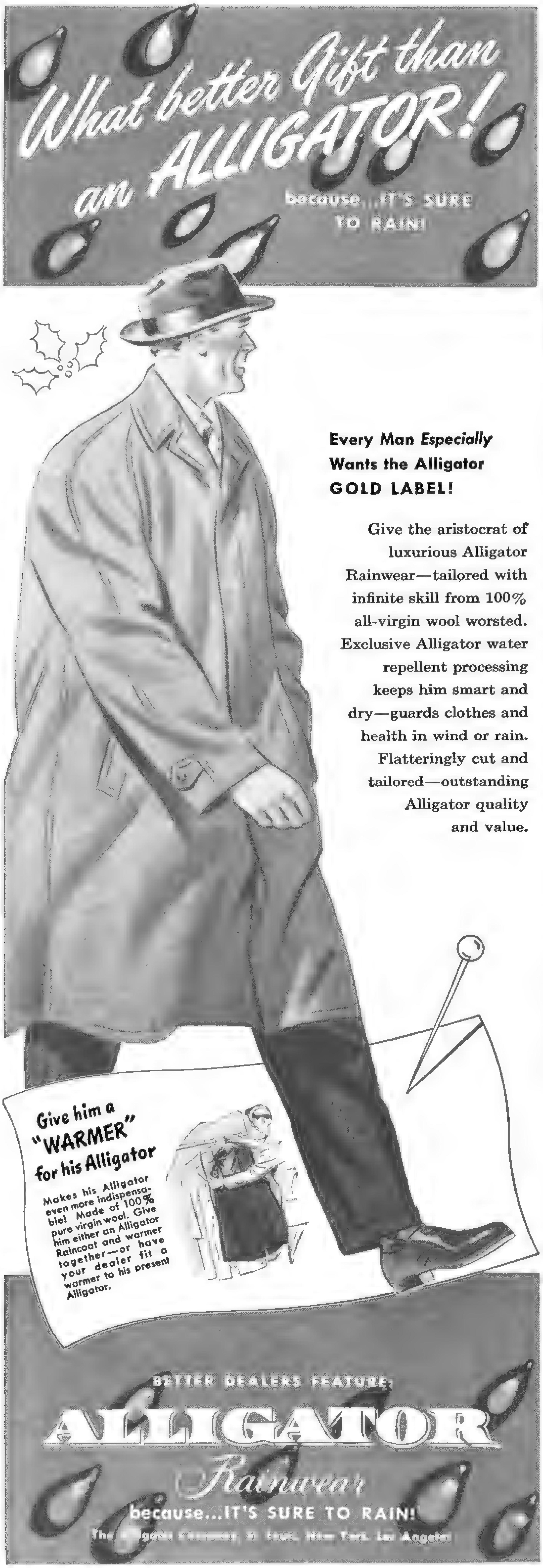

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Guy's joint.

We did not go up the brownstone steps; we went around and to the right and under the steps and Cry put a key into a sheet-metal door, and he locked it behind us. He opened a second door into a long narrow hallway and we went all the way and then Cry pushed for one of those self-service elevators with the buttons. It came and it bobbed to a stop in front of us, gratingly, like a tired locomotive harried down by a bull-red flag.

Cry put his finger on the bottom button.

We went down one stop into a lobby with one door and Cry knocked and said "Me" to the "Who?"—then he opened the door and he straightened his arms along the seams of his pants and he said, "Pray view, gents."

"Pray view what?" Denny said.

"Pray view. It's polite. It's French."

It was a large rectangular room with a thick blue carpet.

There was an enormous red-mahogany modern round desk in the middle, and in each corner there was a small square red-mahogany secretarial desk, catty-corner, three of which were lumped with clusters of telephones. The fourth had its top down and typewriter out and behind the typewriter there was a blonde without make-up, her hair pinned up in an ungraceful swirl. She paid no attention to us at all. She never did look up. She typed, and the little bell rang, and she typed more, and she changed the sheets and she typed more. I never discovered the why or the when or the what for of this disinterested incongruous typist.

Against each of the long walls there were two morocco red leather couches. The narrow walls had nothing against them except identical oil paintings of a ponderous nude with flopping breasts asleep in the grass along a purple stream. A few yards in from the narrow walls, but yards from the red round desk, on either side of the desk and facing each other across the desk, were blue leather upright two-seater settees. The desk opened for the knees on one side and on that side there was a high-backed mahogany swivel chair, swiveled up high, and there were three more high-backed mahogany chairs around the desk.

It was whitely brilliant over the desk from a wide inverted-funnel police-grill-type chandelier. The rest of the room was dim, in comparison, indirect light reaching for the ceiling from hidden bulbs in the molding high on the walls.

There was no window.

The Little Guy squirmed in the high-back swivel chair and he glared at his gin hand. Front Room Strader ate his cigar and discarded the nine of hearts.

"Knock. Four points."

"Lucky, lucky, lucky," the Little Guy said.

A tired young man, slim and dapper in two-hundred-dollars' worth of olive-green basket weave with a white high-collared shirt and no tie, crossed his legs in one of the blue settees, picking at his fingernails with the point of a toothpick.

Crying-towel Reed said: "Hi."

Nobody answered him.

Nobody looked at us.

I went across to the couch that faced the Little Guy and I lit one of the Butcher's cigarettes. Denny sat in the other corner of the couch. Cry kibitzed over Front Room's shoulder.

"What you call the silent treatment," I said, loud enough to Denny. "You're supposed to get nervous."

"Knock," Front Room said. "The book. Ten."

"No lay," the Little Guy said. "How do you like that?"

Front Room poked numbers across the tally sheet, then he shuffled and the Little Guy cut and Front Room dealt.

The Little Guy, under lights, wasn't as young or as handsome as he had been in the dimness of the doorway at Mona's on Gracie Square. He was about fifty, with mauve patches under his eyes and a thin network of light pockmarks on his face like the shadow of chicken wire around a children's playground. But the guy had style.

Not Front Room.

Front Room was gauche as a left-handed spitballer.

He was a figure around the town: long and thin and gaunt and hollow-bellied in dark baggy clothes and a striped-silk shirt. He wore the heavy-framed glasses that bank presidents wear, wide and tight over the ears, with thumb-width lenses that put his eyes, swimmingly, inches in front of his face. He was the Little Guy's outside man; he wasn't strictly a hood like Cry. You saw him around, in his striped-silk shirt—talking fix along Jacobs Beach, making signs with his fingers behind third base at the Polo Grounds, over by the frankfurter stand between halves at the pro football games, a half flight up at the Garden basketball nights talking fast to the characters with the off-the-face hats and their hands up to their elbows in the pockets of the tan-white polo coats.

"Gin," he said. "In the middle."

The Little Guy spread his hand. "That's what *I* was playing for. Stuck with two jacks and a queen. Thirty plus twenty is fifty."

"Blitz," Front Room said. "All the way across." He added the figures on the score card. "That's six hundred twelve bucks."

The Little Guy paid him. Querulously he said, "And now: what have we got here?"

"Here we got him." Cry gave me the thumb. "The professor."

"Yes. Mr. Chambers. People have been talking to me about you. Delighted."

Then he looked at Denny.

"Hello," Denny said.

"Hello, Denny boy. How's Viggy?"

"Fine."

The Little Guy leaned back in his swivel chair and he bit at the nail of his right index finger.

"Out," he said, smilingly.

"What?" Denny said.

"Out."

Denny stood up. "Yes, but . . ."

The slim young man abandoned the blue settee. He moved with grace and unconcern and he put a knuckle on Denny's chin. His eyes were black and wet like mud puddles on a dim road and his voice was like a kid's kazoo.

"You heard the man, bub. Out."

Denny dissipated the knuckle off his chin with an open right and he short-jumped a closed left to the middle button of the olive-green drape, but the slim young man was agile moving away from the punch. He placed his hand inside his jacket and he showed Denny an elegant .22, white-handled and dainty.

He checked with the Little Guy. "What do you want with him?"

"You'll take him upstairs and you'll get a cab and you'll ride him downtown to his dance hall. The Utopia. And no trouble."

"Not unless he begs for it."

Denny about-faced, leisurely, looking down to me.

"Well?"

"No sense you hanging around," I said, "in the circumstances."

"Yeah, but . . ."

"You know where you left me. Thanks for the company."

Denny shrugged. "Okay." He turned back to the Little Guy. "Okay. Tell your cokey-boy to sit down. I don't need an escort."

The Little Guy smiled. "You get one regardless."

The slim young man took a narrow Homburg off a hall tree.

Crying-towel Reed opened the door for them.

"Thanks for the job on Max," the Little Guy said.

I didn't answer.

Front Room Strader pushed back his chair, stretched up to his full round-shouldered skinny height, and came to my couch. He grinned chummily with brown pointed teeth and he sat down. He closed his mouth and he stared at me. His eyes filled the glass of his spectacles, faded-jeans blue and unblinking.

Crying-towel Reed sat on one of the square desks and leaned his elbows on his knees.

The Little Guy lit a cigarette. His left cuff moved up. He wore four diamond rings, one for each finger, and higher up there were diamonds in his wrist watch. All that blistering junk under the strong top-light fascinated me. The Little Guy noticed.

"Barbaric," he said. "Only the left side."

I didn't say anything.

"Diamonds," he said. "I cannot resist them. But I limit myself to my left hand only. Why, there's guys that use them for buttons on their underpants, and for cuff links and for the top of the zipper on the fly. Take that Lucius guy. He carries them in his lapel. You know?"

"Yup."

"Where's my valise?"

"It's not your valise."

He smiled and he clambered out of his swivel chair and his little feet took many steps coming to me, unhurriedly. Cry slid off the desk. Front Room exaggerated the movements of unhooking the weight of a Colt from a holster and holding it in his lap.

The Little Guy pointed to the rings on his fingers. "If I slap you with these, backhand, you bleed. If I really go, while someone holds you, you could get a very mashed up face. We will skip that. For now. Would you like to know why thanks for the job on Max?"

"Sure."

"It's like this. Max takes the valise down there with two other guys, Jasper and a guy Abe Green. Max bossed the trick. Maybe it wasn't all his fault. I never told him what was in the bag or how valuable. But I damn well told him it was important. It was a stopover, till I contacted a guy. Well, they start throwing themselves a beer party and then Jasper and Abe go out on a date with a couple of striperoos from Jersey. According to Max, they are just going to pick them up, catch a few drinks at a bar and bring them back to the apartment. Then I called Max and told him I was coming down. The flophead figures I'll be sore because he let the boys go out, so he looks for a stall. He tells me he was just on his way out; that his wife called up because he had both sets of keys and she and the kids were locked out; and he'll meet me at Mona's and we'll both go down together. He hoped, by then, the boys would be back. And that is the kind of mishmash that gave you your break. That's why thanks for the job on Max. He had it coming. Only not from you."

I dumped my cigarette in a water-bottom ash tray alongside the couch. "How's he doing?"

"Max is mending a broken back in Flower Hospital. What do you hit with? Baseball bats?"

"Yup," I said. "I carry them in my jacket pockets. Instead of toothpicks."

Very funny.

"All right," he said. "What about it?"

"What about what?"

"What about the bag?"

"What about it?"

"This about it. Either I get the bag or you get cooled. That's a very simple formula."

"It won't work in reverse."

"What would that mean?"

Pointedly I said, "If it should happen that I got killed, first, you just don't ever get the bag."

"Could be."

"Also if you turn your boys loose on me with the idea that they bang it out of me, that won't work either."

"Why?"

"It'll be a waste."

"Of what?"

"Energy."

"Why?"

"Because I'm going to tell you. Now."

"That's different." He puffed his cigarette and his diamonds glittered.

I sighed for him, heavily, and I crossed my legs. "The bag, and contents, are deposited with my partner, Philip Scoffol."

He shook his hands at me. "Wait a minute. Before you give with the funny stuff. Is there any way *you* can suggest that I handle this business?"

"By doing business."

"*What?* I thought you work for Viggy?"

"I work," I said. "For me."

He went back to his round desk and his high chair. His face puckered. He

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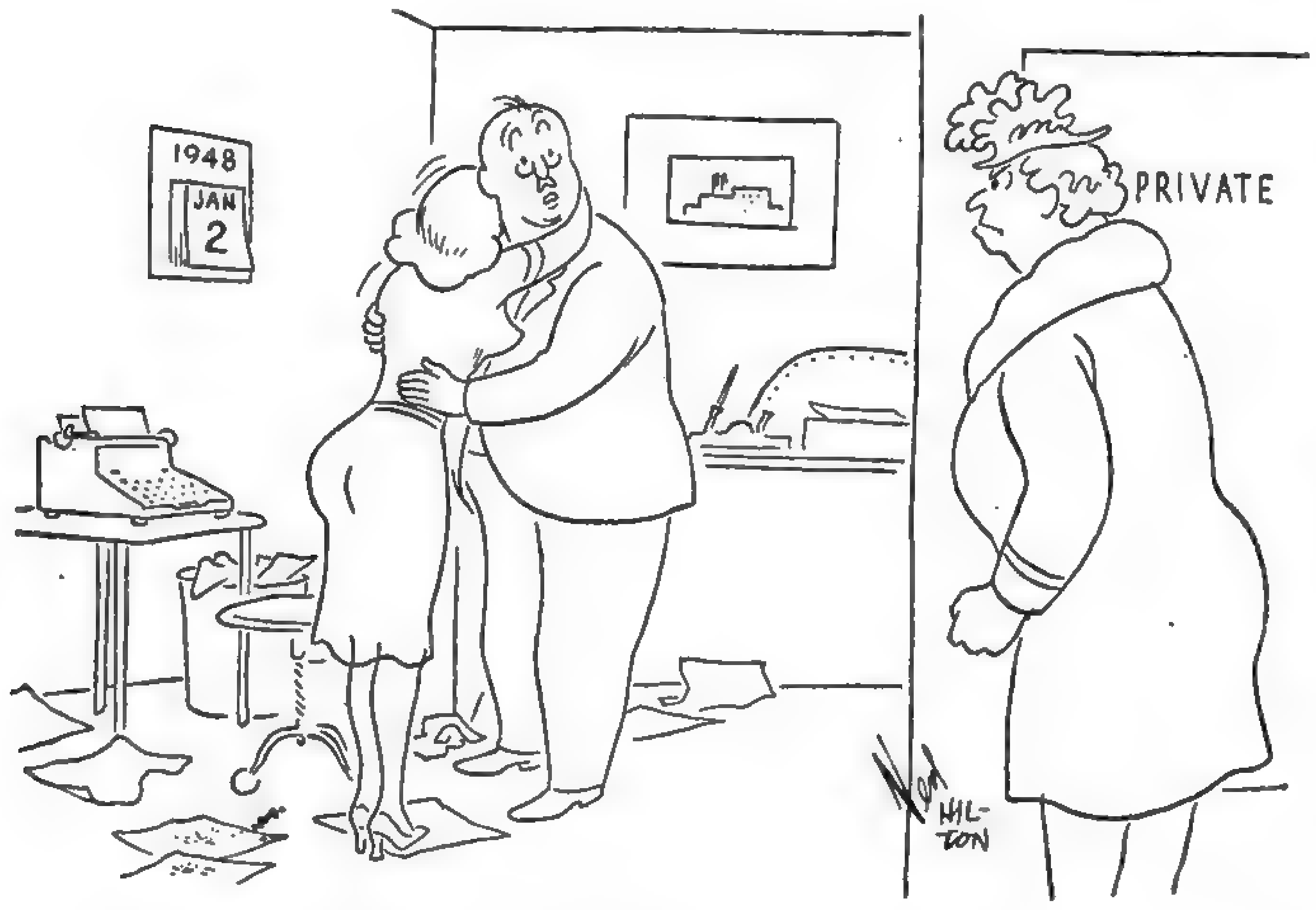
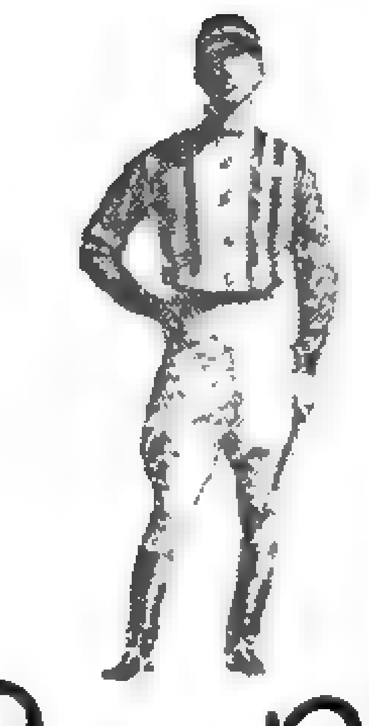


"I was just consoling Miss Patrick, dear—she's been dating all the letters 1947 today"



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worked on his index finger. He spat out a chewed-off fingernail. "How do you make it?"

I drew in a long breath, noisily, and I held it, and I let it out slowly, with words: "I make it like this. I'm told that stuff is worth two million dollars. I am also told there's a half million in it for the guy that delivers it. I deliver it. That's my cut. Half a million."

Back went the index finger.

Nobody said a word.

Front Room was restless on the couch.

Crying-towel leaned on the desk.

The Little Guy said, "How do you know I don't cross you?"

"I'll fix that. You'll get the cash. You can get it. You run a gambling house here. That's good for a hundred thousand in the safe. All your kind of guys have cash stashed away. Send around for it. That's your business. You'll have five hundred thousand for the professor when I deliver it."

"I could still cross you."

"That's what you think. I'm not finished. I come here with cops. I deliver the bag and you deliver the cash and then the reason I got cops is that I needed protection for all that green. But if you make with the cross, then I put the finger on you for the Algernon Hale knock-off, and Charlie Batesem."

"I had nothing to do with that," he said.

That was the *one* reason I was visiting on a red couch in the basement of the Square Deal Club inhaling unfragrance from Front Room Strader. To get the Little Guy's statement. Impromptu; like I'd gotten it. Explosive; like epsom salts. Offhand; while his mind was on something important, like two and a half million dollars.

I pressed it, anyway. "I'd tell them that all I knew was that the bag was yours. That you'd hired me as a private detective to pick it up out of a check-box in the subway. That would plant it square on you, because there's a guy Ralph March who knows that Algernon Hale brought that bag into New York the night he was killed."

It didn't bother him. He wasn't interested.

Neither was I, any more.

He lit a cigarette off his cigarette and shrewd wrinkles jumped around his eyes. He was punching around for an out, and he had probably found one; there must have been a lot of outs in the story I had cooked up over a fast fire. But the hell with that. Be shrewd in a hurry, Mister Little Guy; I'd like to get the hell out of here.

"Call up," he said.

"Whom?"

"Your partner. Tell *him* to deliver it. You've cut yourself in on a deal. But no cops. I don't like cops."

Crying-towel came away from the desk.

"No good," he said. "This guy is slimy."

"Shut up," the Little Guy told him.

Of course. The Little Guy had a big idea.

He looked at Front Room and Front Room looked at me. Front Room took the gun out of his lap. "Get up, shtoonk."

He got up too.

Mildly the Little Guy said: "You are going to call him up. If you don't call him up then you're going to get shot, and then we work it out with the Scoffol guy without you."

I leaned over his desk, near him. "Mister Little Guy, you stink. I want to play it straight and you want to play leap-frog. If I call him, it's no good. He's Scoffol, who used to be an inspector with the police. He knows all about this deal. If I call him, no matter what I tell him, he knows he's being futzed around. Because I wouldn't *call* him on a two-and-a-half-million-dollar proposition, not with all the characters wanting in, not unless I was being prodded. I would *see* him. Personal. I couldn't be too busy for two and a half million. So it's no good. You see what I mean?"

He rubbed his hand across his mouth, not liking it.

I said, "I'm playing it straight, and I'm going to convince you. And I'm going to trust you, because if you can make the chunky end of a big deal, you'd be an awful dope to put skids under it trying to cheat me out of the little end."

"How?" he said. "How you going to convince me?"

"By going downtown and getting it. Like I outlined. And don't jump. You send your friends with me."

The Little Guy walked the floor with that. "You're a smart cookie, professor. But please remember, if this thing backfires, I'll catch up with you." Then he said: "Use the Buick. Front Room drives. Cry sits in the back with Viggy's private. I'll be right here. And I'm waiting."

"I need a pipsqueak," Cry said.

The Little Guy gave him a black automatic out of the desk.

Then he settled in the throne chair with his finger in his mouth.

Chapter XVIII

The Buick was a commodious job and Front Room was a careful driver; it was cellophane-smooth and silent rolling down the West Side highway, fog up over the river, at a cautious thirty-five on the far right side of the road.

It gave me time to worry.

There was Front Room and there was Cry, a couple of the boys working out a hitch: there was no Little Guy to trouble himself about my temporary well-being on account of two and a half million dollars. My custodians were tense gentlemen of small imagination and large dependence upon the pull-finger; they reached, when the call was for duty, casually but quickly, like mamma with the toidy-seat for junior. If I got coy, lungingly, I could damn well collect a lot of little holes in my person.

I got coy, unlungingly:

"You get out at the next opening."

"No, we don't," Front Room said. "The next what you call the opening is One Twenty-fifth Street. You told us the guy lives in a hotel on Forty-seventh Street."

"The ex-inspector from the cops," Cry murmured.

I said, "May I smoke?"

Cry said, "Sure."

I smoked. I said, "Don't turn off. But if we lose a hell of a lot of time, don't blame me."

"We got plenty time," Cry said.

"Oodles," said Front Room.

"Oodles?" I queried.

"Oodles," he said.

"Okay. Oodles. Let the Little Guy sit in his cellar. Let him sit all night." I put my neck on the back of the seat and I closed my eyes.

Silence, all around, for about ten seconds.

Then Front Room unlatched. "What do you mean in the cellar all night, pally?"

"Like this. Maybe my ex-inspector from the cops isn't home and maybe he left a number at the desk where I can reach him. So I ought to call up before he isn't at that number either. Or, maybe, he's fixing to go out right now—the guy's a bachelor—so a phone call would stop him and he'd wait for us. That kind of thing. A little phone call could possibly save us sitting around in the lobby half the night parceling remarks about the beautiful legs going in and out the elevators. And all the time the Little Guy is in the cellar with the itch on his thighs. See?"

Front Room grunted.

I said, "That's all, brother. But it's sensible. And I've got as many oodles as you've got oodles."

Did you ever cross your fingers around a cigarette?

Cellophane-smooth and silent; fog up over the river; cautious thirty-five; right side of the road—it was very quiet in the car, and your detective with the bent cigarette was producing rapidly and profusely from all his pores with sweat, telepathy, black magic and prayer.

The car moved to the left of the roadway.

I lifted a cramped wet neck off the comfortable upholstery. I brought up the cigarette with clothespin fingers. I dragged hard and I pulled deep. Then I flung it out of the open window and I said many thanks, soundlessly. And indiscriminately.

He slid the car down the exit lane and we turned left on One Twenty-fifth. We rolled up in front of drugstore lights and he braked and sighed and twisted around and he leaned his chin on spatulate fingers.

"You don't get funny," he said. "You go make your phone call. We go with you. Cry is by the door. I go in the booth with you. That's the way we do it."

We went and Cry was by the door and Front Room was in the booth with me, and taking the nickel out of my pocket was like the fellow with the bull fiddle arranging for a seat in a crowded subway.

I got the hotel in two rings and I got Scoffol on one buzz.

"Hello," I said. "It's Pete."

"I'm going to bed."

"I'm coming up to see you."

"Some other time. I'm going to bed."

"I'm bringing a couple of characters with me. To pick up the bag. The Little Guy sent me."

"*What?*"

I didn't say anything.

"What?" he said. "You sound like trouble."

"Right."

"Can't talk?"

"Right."

I had the receiver flat-pat on my ear. "*Blast* that other case. I'm busy now. This is important."

"Blast *what?*"

"Correct."

"Blast . . ."

"Exactly."

"You mean that?"

"Yes."

"That bad?"

"Yes."

"Real trouble?"

"You heard me."

"You actually want me to blast?"

"Yes, quick, and no questions."

"When?"

"The minute we come."

Scoffol hung up.

"The minute we come," I said to dial tone. "I want it packed and ready. Front Room Strader and Crying-towel Reed. We're going to pick it up and bring it uptown. Swell. Thanks."

2

We all had our hands in our pockets as we went through the lobby and into the elevator, but upstairs in the quiet carpeted hallway only I had my hands in my pockets with my fingernails in my palms. (They weren't worried about my hands; they had patted me for bumps.) Their hands were out, the naked guns flat at their legs, and they made little excited breathing sounds.

"You knock," Front Room said. "We're in back of you."

I knocked.

Scoffol said, "Come in."

We marched in like that.

Cry closed the door.

Scoffol looked sleepy in a red bathrobe with his hands behind his back.

"I'll get it," I said, and I took one step forward and then I swept down and over and quick-rolled at Front Room's feet and I grabbed and he came down on me clumsily. I heard Scoffol's gun.

I hoped it was Scoffol's gun.

If it was, no more piecework for Crying-towel Reed; Scoffol in his cop days was constantly enmeshed with medals for marksmanship. But I didn't look. I didn't have the time. I was busier than a fiddler at a square dance. I beat my head on Front Room's stomach and my knees held his feet down and my left hand was up and tight around his right wrist where, approximately, his gun was clamped, and we squirmed in a tiresome horizontal dance on the floor. Then I heard the sobbing echoless crunch of metal on bone, twice, and Front Room Strader retired. Wearily, Scoffol unbent and he sighed in his awkward red bathrobe and he pointed at Crying-towel Reed who was strangling himself, gurglingly, bright blood rolling between his fingers, sitting on the floor, swaying.

"An unlucky guy," Scoffol said. "It severed the big vein in his neck. He has a tear right through him."

Then Cry went over on his side, knees up, like it was cold and he didn't have a blanket. I went over and took one hand off; flesh curled away and the hole pumped unhurriedly like a fountain in the park. I put his hand back

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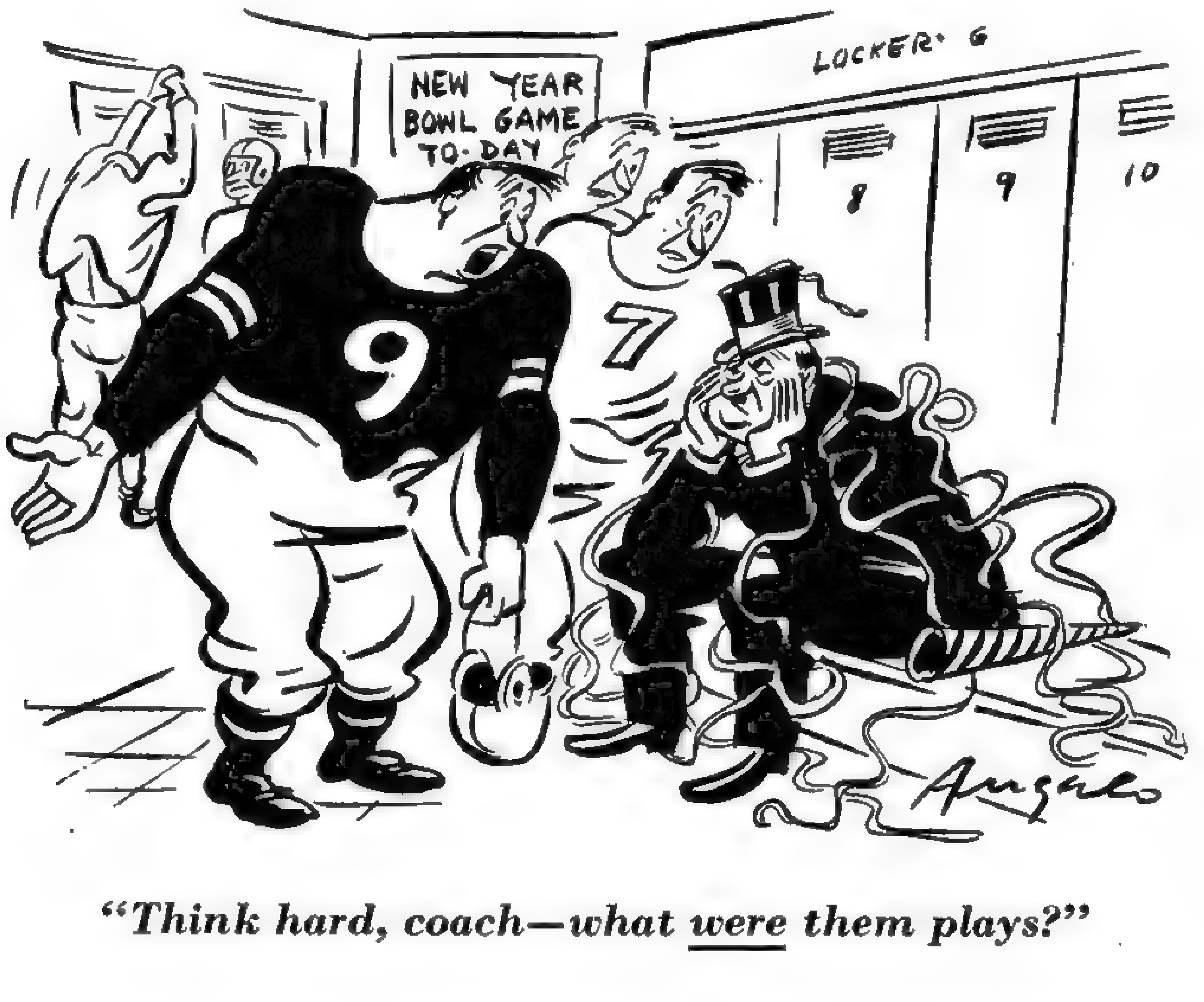

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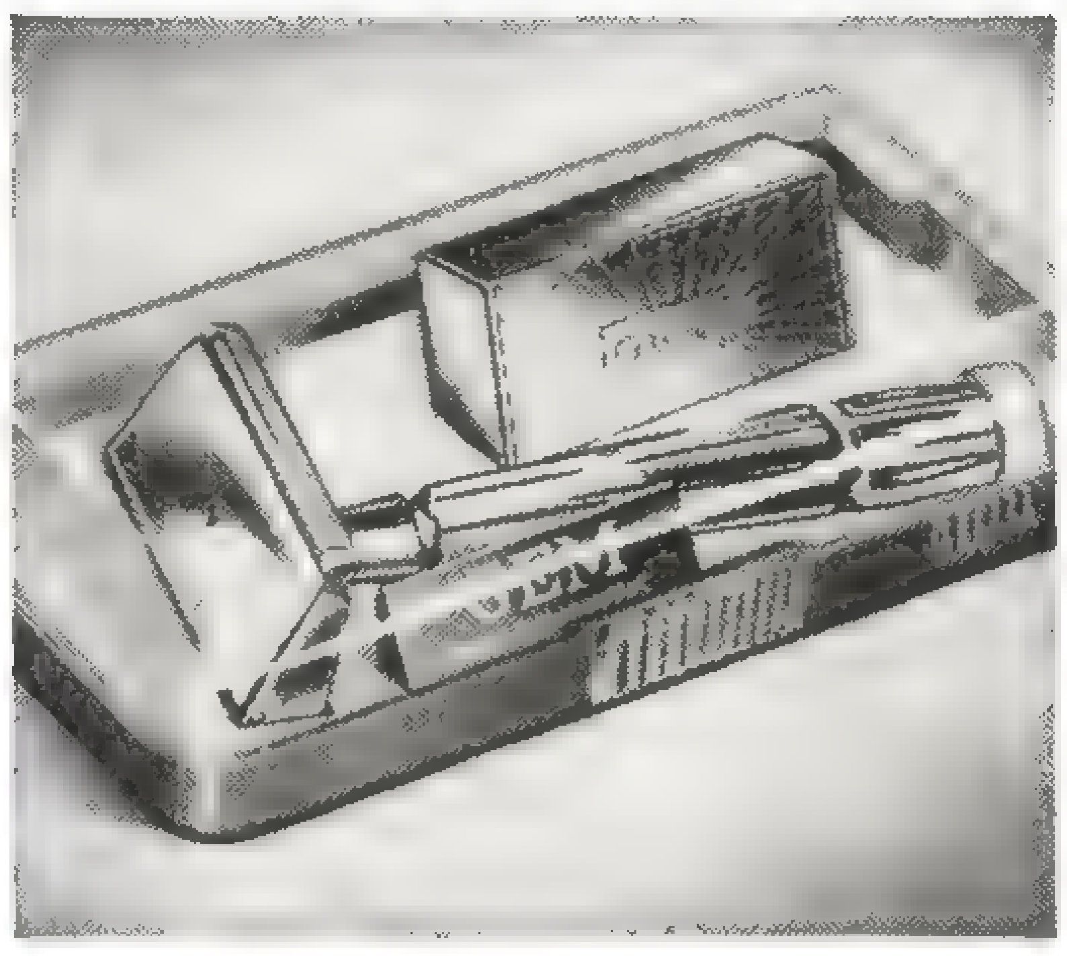

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and I swallowed the blob of thick nothing that grew in my throat.

"Call an ambulance," I said, "anyway. And take care of the other guy. Call cops. Breaking and entering. Leave me out of it. I've had a little trouble with Parker. You haven't seen me. And don't worry about Front Room Strader, the comatose guy with the glasses. He won't talk no matter what you say. He's one of the Little Guy's boys. So long and I'll be in touch, and I'm sorry about disturbing you at bedtime."

3

I stood under the neon-fringed marquee of Scoffol's hotel and I waved at the feed-line of taxis.

"Yes, sir," the man in the cap in the front seat said.

"Thirteen Gracie Square."

"Yes, sir. You see that rodeo in the Garden? Them goddam cowboys . . ."

I got rodeo all the way from Forty-seventh Street to Eighty-fourth Street and East End Avenue which is Gracie Square and there I said, "All right. This corner will do," and then I saw Ralph March come out of Thirteen Gracie Square and look around and I slid down to the bottom of the cab faster than my cabbie's cowboys off unbusted broncos.

"Shift," I said.

"What?"

"Shift. Move up to the next block."

I crawled up on the seat and I watched through the rear glass. Ralph walked down the stairs and he whistled at the cab and he waved at it.

"Roll," I said. "Around the corner."

We rolled.

"What's the matter with you?" the cabbie said.

"Nothing. I'm trying to catch my wife with her boy friend. You know how it is. Only I'm too late. The guy's just leaving."

Sagely the cabbie said, "That's not the way to do it. You get a lawyer. They do it. They get one of them private eyes, what all they got to do in life is peep across the transoms . . ."

"All right," I said. "Thanks."

I paid him and I walked back.

Ralph was gone.

4

I went up to 3B. I didn't knock. The door was part open. I pushed through. I started to say, "Mad." I didn't finish.

Madeline Howell wasn't there.

Viggy's valise wasn't there.

Mona Crawford was there.

Face down: the still shape of her young body was softly outlined in a tight-bodiced winter-cream dress against the thick nap of the red carpet, her dark hair rippling out from her head as though she were floating in water. The white scalp line of the part of her hair on the back of her head was neat and straight like the thin dull-sheen seams of her nylons: straight and rigid and motionless.

I turned her over.

One eye glinted at me like a black marble.

There was no other eye. There was a hole: a fibrous blood-encrusted socket. There was a sooted, broken, questioning eyebrow. There was blood and mucous, stiff-wet on her cheek. There was a lumped-up stain on the carpet. Red on red.

I put her back on her face. The bullet had passed through her head. I didn't look for it.

I looked for the valise.

I didn't find it.

5

I walked until I came to a saloon and bar rye burned at the back of my throat and I returned the little glass to the bar, unquietly, and I pointed at it and the man refilled it and I knocked it down. I didn't touch the soda. I said, "Where's your phone?"

"In the back."

I called Ralph March at the Ambassador. He wasn't there. I shuttled from the bar to the phone and soon enough Ralph said, "Hello," and he sounded as though he were tiptoe on one leg on a table-top with a mouse glaring up. Dear Ralph.

"What about it?" I said.

"What?"

"Gracie Square."

"*What?*"

"Gracie Square, that's what."

"I don't understand."

"Try." Silence.

"You finished trying?"

"I didn't do it."

"I'm inclined to believe you."

Petulantly he said, "Why?"

"Because of the bag."

"What bag?"

"Viggy's bag. The bag you helped pack."

"What in damnation does that have to do with it?"

"It was there. In Madeline Howell's apartment. But you didn't come out with it; because I saw you. So someone else was there before you. Which is why I'm inclined to believe you. *Inclined.* Now what about it?"

"Thank goodness. I'm upset and I'm frightened. Dreadfully."

"All right. Dreadfully. What about it?"

There was a pause for the licking at lips. "When Pierre Vyseuseau returned from his interview with the police, I told him about your visit. We talked about you. We got around to descriptions. You were Peter Chambers. You were also Barry Drumgoole. I didn't understand that, and I didn't like it. I wondered whether you didn't have a little ax of your own that you were grinding. You didn't call me for two days. I decided upon some personal snooping. I remembered the name you had snapped at me. Madeline Howell. I checked with the paper and I went visiting. I saw the girl on the floor. I touched her. I felt for a pulse."

"The door was open."

"It was open when I came. Someone had left in a hurry."

"Sit tight," I said. "Don't go way."

I hung up.

I checked with the phone book for Madeline Howell's newspaper. I asked for Olafson. Olafson was out to eat.

"About Madeline Howell . . .?"

"Olafson," the guy said. With finality.

He hung up and I hung up and I slammed out of the phone booth and I walked. I kicked toes along the sidewalks and I shook up all the rattles in my brain and the best I could come up with was a frantic desire for an ice cream soda. *Ice cream soda.* Viggy and his satchel and tapestries and little guys with diamonds and striperoos from Jersey and a live, eager, vibrant girl like a distorted cyclops with an agate eye—it was cutting me down to size: small size, about eleven years old and gawky in a corner drugstore sipping with the straws, ogling, edge-eyed, the platform bosom of the druggist's daughter dipping down for double scoops.

I wanted an ice cream soda.

I trudged up to Eighty-sixth Street, seeking, and tucked away among the cider stubes and beer dispensaries I found a soft-drink saloon and I ordered and I got a chocolate soda with pistachio ice cream with whipped cream in billows out of a bellows, and I was in the middle of the soda and a decision to look in on Marmaduke—when I saw him.

Pierre Vyseuseau. So help me.

There were mirrors behind the ice cream bar and mirrors on the wall beams and a covey of mirrors on top in the angle of slanted ceiling and wall—and they did a periscope job; you could see around the corner, practically. And, looking up, thinking about Marmaduke on Lexington with overtones of deep bosom over double scoops, I saw him, in the surrealistic conglomeration of mirror—Pierre Vyseuseau at the wheel of a cute grey club sedan, parked outside somewhere against a curb. I didn't finish the soda.

I paid and I went.

I didn't know in which direction to look. I looked in all directions like Dorothy Parker casting quips (no relation to the lieutenant out of Homicide) and the best I got was the tail end of something grey turning the corner, downtown.

Chapter XIX

Pick a murderer.

Eeny meeny miney mo.

Stand outside an ice cream parlor on Eighty-sixth Street in Yorkville, New York City, and be a dejected detective. Watch the sky open and hear the half-dollar raindrops slap the streets. Feel the useless paralyzing panic grow inside of you all the way to the creeping hair on your head, like you're a brave kid exploring two feet in among the cobwebs of the dark delicious haunted house, and the door slams shut behind you. Be a detective on Eighty-sixth Street with sweat on your palms, and don't do anything: because you don't know what to do. Stand there and get wet, indecision and douot sparring inside of you, and listen to your heart rap against your throat.

Then brush it off.

Get going.

Move.

Rain, again, put a fierce spray of bubbling mist on the sidewalk in front of Seventy-nine Lexington Avenue, and a thin dime was still the key that solved the lock on the lobby floor. I tapped on the door two flights up, front, and I said, "Me, Pete."

"I beg your pardon," Marmaduke said.

"Peter Chambers."

"I am sorry, sir."

"Tell Viggy. Mr. O'Shea. Tell him it's Pete Chambers."

"He isn't here, sir."

"Open up."

"No, sir."

I put my nose close to the crack. "Open up or I yell for cops."

It helped. He opened the door against the chain-latch and one eye inspected me. "Oh, sir. It is you."

"I."

He unhooked the door and he let me in.

"Hello, Marmaduke."

"How do you do, sir. I thank you again for your good offices the other morning."

He took my hat and coat and shook them out and put them away to dry. He clicked his tongue against his teeth. "This weather. Preposterous. Rain and rain."

"Yeah. Where's Viggy?"

"Out, sir."

"Where?"

"I do not know."

"How long?"

"About two hours, sir. Would you care for some coffee?"

"Thanks, Marmaduke. And gin. A spot. Any gin left?"

"I believe so."

I had gin, and coffee, and Viggy came back.

He put a key in the door and it rammed against the chain-latch and he said, "Hell," and Marmaduke opened it for him. He had a lot of beard and a dark blue felt over his eyes and a form-fitting dark blue wet topcoat. He looked at me like I was a condolence card with a black border, sadly and grimly and hopelessly.

"What the hell," he said. "For all the good you do, you may as well be here. Here, at least, you're company."

He gave his hat and coat to Marmaduke and he opened his jacket over the back of a chair. He growled about the rain and he fluttered his arms and rustled his shirt-sleeves. "Humid," he said. He unhooked a shoulder holster and he put it on the table.

I pulled it over.

The gun was tight and short-barreled, a Smith & Wesson .38 revolver. I broke it. It had four firm cartridges and two empty chambers. I smelled it. It smelled of leather from the holster and of ancient oil. It smelled of nothing else. I put the shells back and I straightened it out and I put it back in the holster.

"A real bright gumshoe," Viggy said. He put an open palm to his cheek and he patted it, gently, like an embarrassed aunt working off the baby's overripe spittle-kiss.

Nervously Marmaduke said, "Pardon?"

"Real bright. First he goes into his trance and he comes up with a beaut that winds me up down here on the lamout. Then he disappears. Now, he's here, of all places, smelling my gun."

"Would you like some coffee?" Marmaduke inquired.

"I would like some coffee." He put a leg over a chair and he sat down across from me and he tilted the chair and he looked at me, fixedly. "You are real for me. Like a hole in the head."

Faint hiccough of October thunder tapped against the windows. Marmaduke brought his coffee.

"Where you been?" I asked Viggy.

"Who wants to know?"

I lit up and I put my elbow on the table and my chin in my hand. "Gracie Square?" I murmured. The murmur missed: it came out shriller than sorority noise.

"What? What's Gracie Square?"

"Gracie Square. A street."

"Where?"

"Uptown."

"What street?"

"Gracie Square."

"That's what you said before."

"That's right. That's what I said before."

"Let's do it over. Please. Let's do it slow."

"Gracie Square," I said. "A street. Uptown. Marmaduke tells me you've been out for a couple of hours. I'm asking why, and I'm asking if it was Gracie Square."

Solemnly he enunciated: "And who the hell are you?"

He had me there.

"I'm asking," I said, with authority. It limped.

"*Union* Square," he said. "That would be right on the button. Gracie Square, I never heard of. I heard of Gracie Mansion or Manor or something, where the Mayor eats breakfast. Union Square, that would be right on the nose."

"Why?"

"Why? Because I listen to you. Because you figured one out for me. To keep me out of trouble. Remember? That's why I go out looking for you; so you can tell me I am not an ordinary guy: I can't call up and tell them I got corpses in the house. So I'm down here in this hole—excuse me, Marmaduke—so I'm mousetrapped down here for days, and I'm going nuts. So it's late enough and I'm getting moldy and I've got to get out. For air, for stretching my legs, and the hell with all the cops in the world. So I walk along dark streets to Union Square and

Continued on page 138

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I sit on a bench with the rest of the stumblebums and I come back. What's with Gracie Square?"

He drank his coffee.

I said, "A girl got killed there."

"What's that got to do with me?"

"The Little Guy's girl friend."

He put the cup down carefully. "Why?"

"I don't know why."

He reached over and he pulled me close with an aching table between us —by my nice long Countess Mara tie. "So that's it. So that's why you're smelling guns. So the great goddam detective, with the whole damn City of New York outside, including Gracie Square, winds up in Marmaduke's walkup trying to solve his crimes."

"Let go."

"What?"

"The tie."

He let go. "Look, brother, down here you're not going to solve any crimes. I don't feel good and I'm nervous. You can do me a personal favor. You can get the hell out of here."

I slid back the chair and I stood up. I was having a very lousy time—I'd been having a very lousy time all the way back since I'd been retained. I was getting bounced around, like a catamaran on a choppy ocean. I was getting abused. I was collecting sutures in my face and thumbs in my pride. I wasn't enjoying it.

"Just for the hell of it," I said. "Why does the gun have four bullets?"

"You smelled it, didn't you?"

"I smelled it."

"Then you ought to be satisfied."

"Stop," I said. "A gun can be cleaned. If you have the time."

He stood up and he came over and he put his hands on my shoulders, fatherly, like the start of a lecture about the birds and the bees.

"Detective, this one was cleaned maybe a year ago. Just for the hell of it, I'm telling you. I was in the apartment when I got the call from downtown about how smart that smart idea of yours was. I called the Butcher and I told him where I'd be. Then I packed a grip. In a hurry. I grabbed the gun, looked in, and it was empty. The box had four cartridges, which is why the gun has four cartridges. I didn't use it and I didn't kill anybody. Now do me my favor."

"What favor?"

"The favor of kindly getting the hell out of here."

Marmaduke brought my hat and coat.

Viggy sat down at the table and made coffee circles with the cup on Marmaduke's clean tablecloth.

2

I called from a booth in a bar.

"Olafson?" I asked.

"Out to eat."

"Yet?"

"Yep."

"When is he expected?"

"You know how it is . . ."

3

I walked to the corner toward the beautiful taxicab shimmering in the rain with a halo of lights on the roof and a twinkle of lights on its fenders, and I opened the shining two-tone door and I gathered the skirt of my topcoat around my knees in the palace of leather interior with sliding ash trays and tufted armrests and I said, "Waldorf-Astoria," and then I almost choked with pride for him and amazement for me when I read the orange card which proclaimed, "Jackson Tomashefski."

"Well . . ." I said. "Well, well. Coincidence, what?"

"No coincidence," he said. "What's the coincidence, friend? I always hack from that corner. So twice you get me in this neighborhood, so what's the coincidence?"

"Waldorf-Astoria," I said. "All I get is lectures."

He threw the flag down. "How do you like the new job?"

"What new job?"

"The crate. If you want music, just tell me."

"I love it. No music."

"Set me back four thousand currency bucks."

"You own it?"

"For four thousand currency apples, what do *you* think? I don't own it?"

"Yes. I wasn't listening. I thought it was a company car. Look, as long as it's your own car, suppose you stay with me for a while."

He sounded unencouraging. "It's a rainy night. A rainy night is good for business."

"I know it. I'll be making a few stops. I don't like running around in the rain hoping for taxis." I took out my wallet. "Suppose we make a deal. Say, twenty bucks. You be my boy for a few hours."

He thought about it.

"Can do," he said.

"What?"

"Can do."

"Can do?" I put two tens in his uplifted hand. "Okay, Charlie Chan?"

"The name," he said, "is Tomashefski."

4

He let me out on the Lexington Avenue side of the Waldorf and he said, "I'll be over there with the other crates, by the taxi-parking sign," and I walked through the various lobbies to the elevators and I went up to 1212. I knocked on the door and I said to myself, "What the hell am I doing here, and why, and the guy is probably out in his grey coupe riding around in the rain, scaring people in mirrors."

"Who is it?" Pierre Vyseuseau said.

"Chambers. Drumgoole. Remember?"

"But yes. If you please." He opened the door. "I am happy. If you please." He bowed and he joggled his teeth. He tampered, nervously, with the grey Van Dyke.

I got rid of the hat and coat. "Mr. Vyseuseau, I shall be brief."

"No. No, no, no, no. You are not, please, typical of the American, I am happy. Not brief. Excuse me. The drink."

He went out and I got comfortably ensconced in a square soft gold-brocaded lounging chair with a high hassock in front of it and a low telephone beside it. I put my feet upon the high hassock and I took the low telephone in to my lap and practically out of habit I dialed the number of Madeline Howell's newspaper, automatically memorized.

"Olafson," I yapped, like you call people names.

"Just one moment."

A man said, "Olafson."

"Olafson?" I said.

"Olafson," he said.

"Olafson," I said. Then my feet went off the hassock. "Oh, Olafson. This is Peter Chambers. I'm calling about Miss Howell."

"Peter who is this?"

"Chambers."

"It doesn't register."

"Chambers. Scoffol and Chambers. Peter Chambers."

"Oh, oh, yes. How is Mr. Scoffol?"

"Mr. Scoffol is swell. By any chance, would you know where Madeline Howell is?"

"By any chance, I certainly do. She ought to be in Moe's Grotto, if she's still there. One of her stoolies called in with a wide-open item that was sup-

Continued on page 143

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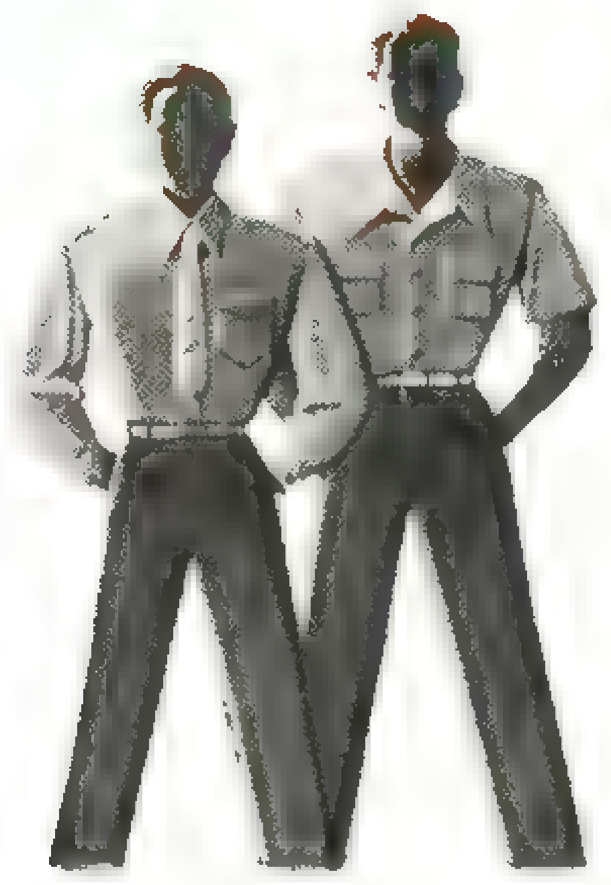

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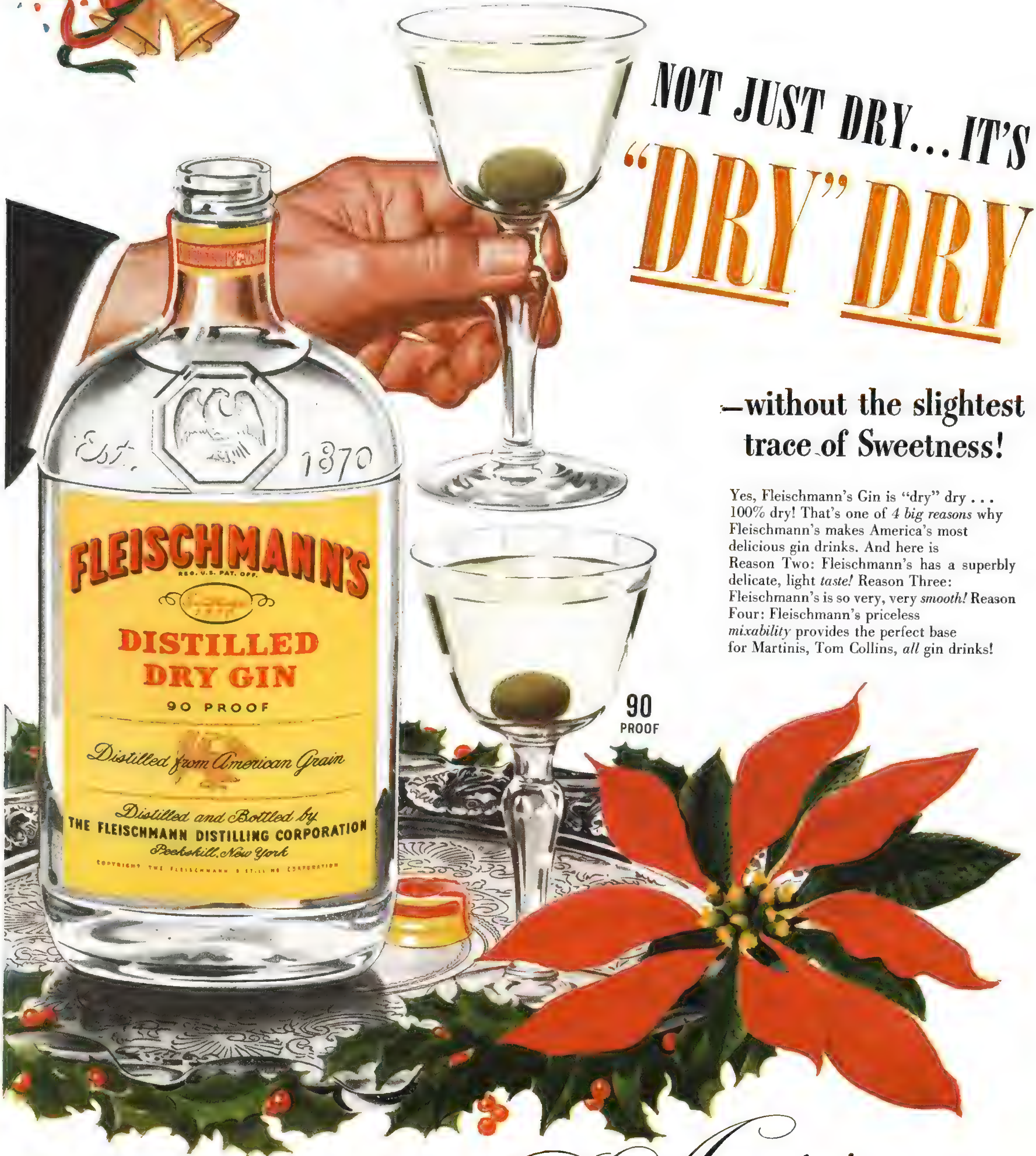
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posed to happen in Moe's Grotto. I called her at home and I told her. Would you like to leave a message?"

"How long ago?"

I waved at the returning Vyseuseau and his bottle of cognac and I smiled, intimately, and I put my feet back on the hassock.

"Maybe two hours."

"Thanks, Olafson."

"Message?"

"No. Thanks."

I put the telephone away and I drank Vyseuseau's cognac. I watched him sit down, stiff in his tuxedo, which is what he'd worn in Viggy's place. He finished his drink and he dabbed at his bow-tie and he put an arm across the back of his chair.

"Mr. Drumgoole, or Mr. Chambers, it is of true pleasure to have your company. Believe me."

I didn't have the time. I put my glass away near the telephone. I said, "What were you doing up along Gracie Square?"

He said, "Pardon," with the weight on the last syllable.

"Gracie Square. Goddam Gracie Square."

"Mr. Drumgoole, you are overwrought, Mr. Chambers."

"Mona Crawford. How well do you know Mona Crawford?"

"Not very well."

"But you know her."

"Of course I know her."

That stopped me.

He smiled for me, gently, cute as a picture-girl in a booby trap. "But of course. It has been my pleasure to attend luncheon at her home only yesterday."

"Fine," I said. "Let's get untangled. Let's clear the decks."

"Decks," he said. "It is on a steamboat."

"Look, I'm not blaming you and I don't care. Let's just get the record straight and go on from there. You and the Little Guy have an arrangement. You employ O'Shea to find the stuff, you tip the midget with the diamonds, he moves in and takes over, and you and he split up two and a half million. That's the theory, and everybody's happy—and I really don't care one way or another, but I'd like to get it straight. Viggy O'Shea makes fifty thousand for being an errand boy, you and the Little Guy pick up about a million and a quarter apiece, and your syndicate is eminently happy. Hunky and dory, huh?"

He stood up and he brought cognac to me and he added some to his glass and he sat down. I didn't touch mine.

"Very clever," he said.

"What?"

"I understand now why you were Drumgoole but really Chambers. It was your thought that I am involved with this Little Person, and you did not wish your name coming back to him too quickly. Is it not?"

"The hell with that. What about the other thing?"

"Which?"

"About you and the Little Guy?"

"What?"

"The partnership."

"Which partnership?"

I stood up and I rubbed my hands and I came over to him. "You deny it?"

"I do not dignify with denial or affirmance."

"Like that," I said.

He lifted his glass and he sipped and his eyes smiled. "Like that."

"Then what the hell were you doing there yesterday?"

"Ah, sir. You disappoint me. Is it then necessary to be in nefarious partnership with an acquaintance in order to luncheon at the home of the acquaintance—let us say, the betrothed of him?"

Mr. Vyseuseau was enjoying himself. He was also riding along with me. Like the old gentleman in the hat in the top seat of the hansom.

Why?

I decided to get out of there. I went for my hat and coat. I said, "What were you doing up there tonight? Near Gracie Square? Up around Eighty-sixth Street?"

"But no, truly . . ."

There was a knock on the door. He didn't hear it.

"But no, truly . . ."

The knock was louder.

"Ah." He put his glass down and he stood up. "One moment," he called. He came close and he patted my cheek. "Mr. Chambers, I am thinking you shall adore this."

Chapter XX

I did not adore it.

It was the Little Guy and three of his gentlemen. There was the slim young man off the blue settee and a thick little perspiring man with jowls for a neck and a hulk-shouldered man, punchy as the fruit bowl at Christmastime, with a square face and small scars and flanged ears and restless eyes.

I wriggled in the soft brocaded chair and I crossed my legs and I opened my mouth and I let it hang; just then, the Little Guy and entourage were quite as inappropriate as webfoot snowshoes on the Ballet Russe.

I closed my mouth.

"Where . . .?" the Little Guy began. Then he saw me. "How . . .?"

"Who?" Vyseuseau said.

"Him. How'd you get him here?"

I closed my mouth tighter. It was beginning to come to me.

Vyseuseau said, "Gentlemen, sit you, if you please."

Nobody sat. Except me.

The Little Guy moved out of his grey snap-brim and his English import with leather buttons. The rest of them stayed dressed: they spread out and leaned against the furniture.

"I get it," I said.

"You are going to get it," the Little Guy said, "I'm afraid."

"Any time," said the square face with the fly-away ears. "That's for me, and a pleasure. I will fix him for Maxie. But good."

"Quiet," the Little Guy said. He came up to me and he poked an impatient finger at my forehead. "Where are they?"

"Who?"

"You know who."

Then he wheeled and ponied over to Vyseuseau. "Give it again. Straight, clear, fast and short."

"At once," Vyseuseau said. "But certainly. First they ceased at a drugstore and they all entered. Thereafter they proceeded to a hotel at Forty-seventh Street. After a time, our friend emerges, only. I mean alone. He engages a taxicab. To Eighty-fourth Street. I am a street behind, always. The taxicab ceased, then commenced again, around a corner. I went after, slowly, but when I reached where it had been, it was going away, but I saw him walking back. I proceeded, slowly, seeing him enter Thirteen Gracie Square. I returned and I parked. He emerged, later, and walked, and entered an ice cream emporium. I parked. Then our eyes met in a mirror. I decided to leave. I left. I called you. I awaited your presence here; and suddenly, *he* knocked and *he* was here."

I listened as intently as the Little Guy and while I listened I learned that I wouldn't be thrown to blossom-ears as exercise boy: because nobody knew about the fireworks on Forty-seventh Street like Mardi Gras over Coney

Continued on page 144

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Island. The volatile Vyseuseau and the nervous Little Guy completed their conversational rigadoon and the Little Guy came back to me, approaching with extended forefinger.

I extended mine and I fenced it off. "Is that what you're doing here?"

"That's what I'm doing here."

"You had better go back."

"Why?"

"They're probably on their way uptown now."

"What?" The finger bent and turned and he chewed on his nail. "I don't get it. At all."

"This," I said. "Scoffol had the bag checked out with a friend in Brooklyn. He wants to go for it but your boys insist upon going with him. Me, I'm busy. I'm going to arrange for coppers to accompany me uptown to your place according to the plan I laid out for you, if you remember. Also, I've got a couple of things to attend to before that. Business. So Scoffol takes over and I leave while he's calling up to make the arrangements."

The Little Guy sat down in the hard chair near the writing desk. "What things to do? *At Thirteen Gracie Square?*"

"Just a minute. Let's get this thing in order first. Then I've got news for you."

"News for me?"

"You and the frog have a deal on the bag. Yes or no?"

"None of your business."

You call that immaterial and irrelevant and not responsive, only I was in no position to call it anything.

"So," I said, "you knew I'd show up at Viggy's joint sooner or later. You had Cry working from under and your partner, the frog, from on top. He's around there every night in his midnight blue tuxedo and his twilight grey choppers. I show up, and he calls you. But you've already been informed that Cry knows I'm there too, and that Cry is working on it. So you tell Vyseuseau to stay with it, and when I ride up to your joint with Cry and the boys, friend frog is behind us in his grey coupe. And while I'm up at your place, so is he. And when I go back, he's behind us—sort of rear-guard technique."

Slowly the Little Guy said, "I don't like the business you give me about your Scoffol and my boys. It don't smell too good from where I am. Maybe we ought to sort of inspect it."

"Inspect. If you ever caught up with Scoffol, he'd talk smoke rings at you till you're dizzy. Don't be a dope. Leave it alone. Listen to me."

"You know just how much I trust you."

"Look. Please and for Chrissake. You weren't born yesterday, and neither was I, and if you think I'm pitching forward passes, the hell with it—think. You'll find out fast enough, and if I am, you can always move in on me. I am not a tank-town shamus with a shiny badge operating from behind my sweatband. I run a big business here and I live here and I don't mix with the likes of you, only on business, and I wouldn't powder for any of you. Logical?"

Music with schmalz and big brave lyrics.

Chambers: heaving with the words, fast and haughty, like the lady with the feathers in the mile-long roadster talking down a traffic cop.

Eagle-ears grunted. "We'll move in on you all right. Shake your head, boss. I will move in on him now. A little bit. For a sample."

I smiled for him. I said, "Fatso, I look forward, and avidly, to kicking teeth down your noisy throat." And I meant it.

He started to move and I stood up. I hoped that they'd depend on him to do a little job on me. I hoped that they wouldn't interfere while he shut my big mouth. The guy got in my hair like peanuts get in your teeth. It would be a pleasure. A good deal of annoyance steam-kettled inside of me, sealed in and no spout. I could use him.

"All right, all right," the Little Guy said.

"No." He kept coming. "I do not like the way the monkey talks to me."

"That's right, Fatso," I said. "You tell him."

Then the slim young man quietly said, "You heard the boss, Ernie," and Ernie stopped, grumblingly.

"What news?" the Little Guy said.

I squared off in front of him and I locked my hands behind my back and I spread my legs like a sawhorse. "Mona," I said. "Someone pushed a slug through her right eye, from very close up."

"What?" he said.

"Dead," I said.

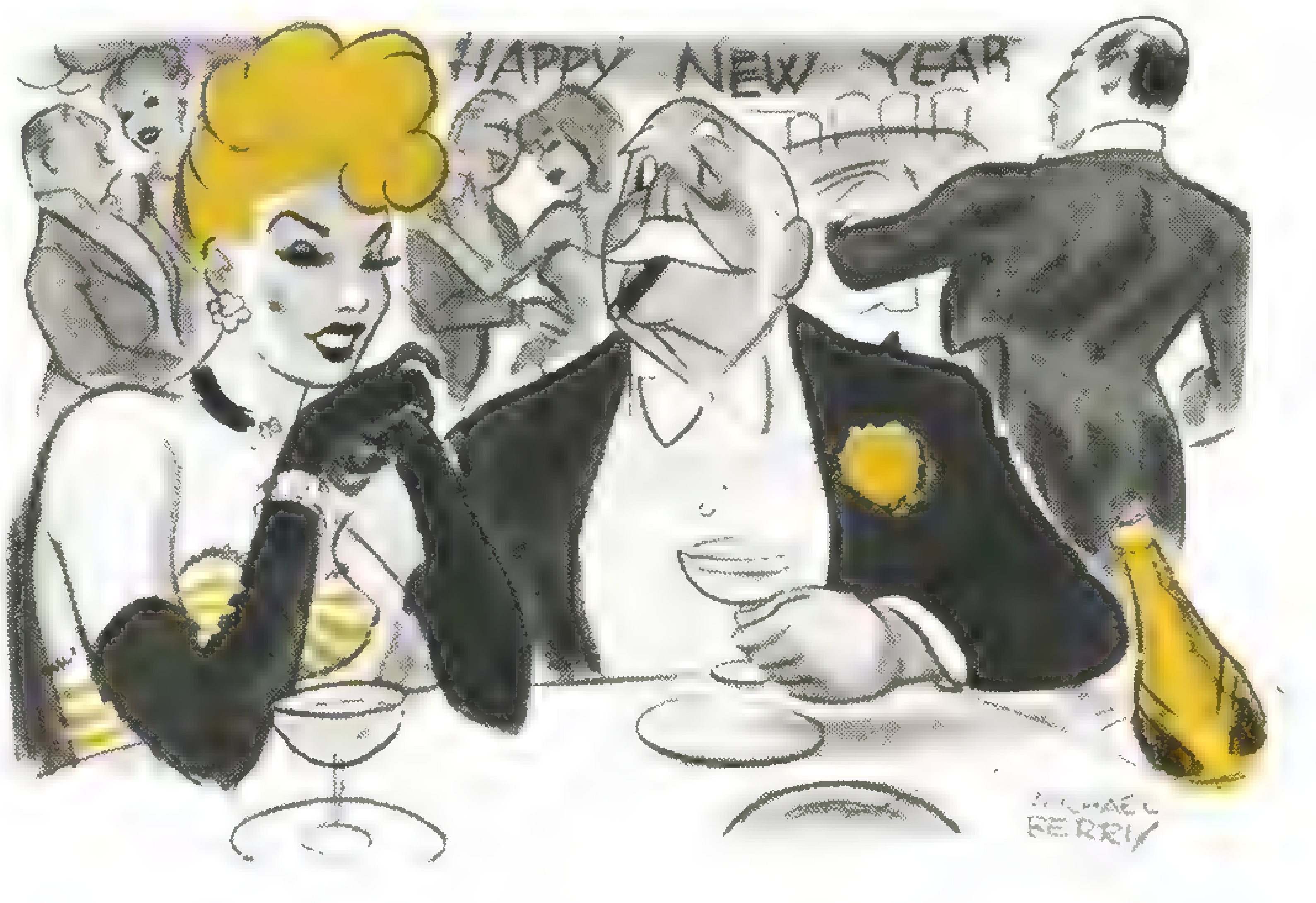
His face was half past twelve on a stopped clock with a limp handle. I turned away, and I turned back.

The slim young man had jumped for his boss.

The Little Guy was ill. His face was gargle-medicine red and his eyes were popped and rigid; and then his face wasn't red any more, but sick and yellow and twisted and his eyes moved up in his head and ugly groups of purple little veins crawled underneath his skin.

"What . . . ?" His mouth was loose. "What, what . . .?"

It wasn't pretty.



"This is the first time Mother has let me stay up until midnight"

Vyseuseau brought him brandy. The slim young man unbuttoned his jacket and opened his tie and pulled at his shirt collar. He was scattered all over the chair, quiveringly, his little feet riding off the floor, limp as the Cavanaugh special you ransom from the hatcheck at the opera; and for one little moment the frantic pity that roars up in front of point-blank agony unembellished, like furious water for flushing the drain (and we're holy and humane and blood-brother to all men), swirled inside of me and I was shaken and sorry for this wretched little man.

I turned it off.

The slim young man accused me. "Look what the hell you've gone and done to him."

"Yeah," I said.

Vyseuseau said, "You are positive?"

The Little Guy fought away from the slim young man and he put his feet down to the floor. He washed at his face with both hands. "How do you know this?"

"I saw her. I touched her."

"Why?"

"I was checking on something. Something that has nothing to do with you."

He stood up. Weavingly. "We've got to get over there," he said. "We've got to get over there."

"No good," I told him. "I've called the cops. You'd mess it up."

"Who?" he asked.

"I don't know. Yet. But I'm going to know. It ties in with my stuff. I need time. I've got to move around."

He wobbled over and he reached up and hung on my lapels.

"You!" he said.

"Don't be crazy, pal."

"You!" he said.

"Pull yourself together. I'm no murderer. I'm a private dick earning a living. You loved the girl. All right, I'm sorry for you. I know how it is. Leave me alone, and I'll take care of it, the best I can, because it's got to do with what I'm working on. Button up, and go on back uptown. I'll let you know."

I brushed him off my jacket. The slim young man brought him more brandy and he drank a lot of it. He sighed, like a shiver. "Okay. I broke up. I'm better. We got two things, now. We got this, and we got business. Look out for yourself."

He didn't look any better to me.

I put on my hat and coat. "That's where I'll be in touch with you. Uptown. Good-by, everybody."

Square-face danced over on light feet and he shoved on my shoulder. "That's what you think, soldier."

"Leave him alone," the Little Guy said. "Okay. Uptown."

Chapter XXI

I found Jackson Tomashefski in the all-night pharmacy of the Lexington Chemists, across from the Waldorf, stanchly parrying comment from three cabbies and a chauffeur in livery, over coffee, about America ain't America any more and the goddam administration is all split up and it don't give two loud hoots in hell for the goddam people any more and all you got to do is be rich and you're awright, otherwise it's just too goddam bad unless you got a union, and a good goddam strong union, or else. I nudged through the vociferous elbows and I delivered the embattled defender.

"Bolsheviks," he said, slamming down the flag on the meter. "Where we going?"

"Moe's Grotto. Fifty-sixth and First."

"Sure. You got to knock the flag down on account the hack inspectors. How do you like them guys? Miscontents. We got the best goddam country in the world . . ."

"Sure," I said.

I found her in a booth in the back behind a large bowl of vegetable salad. I checked my hat and coat and skirted the square bar with green lights and I went through to the Grotto proper. She held a stalk of celery in her hand and she glared at it, soberly. Then she looked up and she saw me and she put the celery down.

"Darling," she said morosely. "Hello."

I moved in beside her.

"What about the bag?" I said.

"Bag?"

"Bag. Suitcase. Satchel. Gladstone."

Her mind wasn't on it. "You took long enough digging up your guy. Don't worry about the bag. It's in very good hands. And I wish you wouldn't harry me, Peter. I'm not in the mood. You are gazing upon a keenly disappointed reporter. That is, if you call the pitter-patter of chi-chi chitchat, reporting."

"But . . ."

"See that woman."

She lifted her eyes and pointed with her face. A woman sat opposite us, four booths down, a fat handsome wattled woman in a dapple-grey dress with a prominent bosom, outboard and aquiline. She had her elbows on the edge of the table, and her bosom, and she stared straight ahead of her.

"That person," Madeline Howell said, "is the wife of a UN big shot. Another UN big shot, not her husband, was supposed to come in for a rendezvous. If I could just jab a hint of that into my column, I'd rock the city. I'd rock the country. I'd rock nations. So what happens? So the guy doesn't show up."

The fat lady got up and went away.

"Mad," I said. "What about the bag?"

"Jesus breezes, stop it with the bag. Mona's sitting on it. At the apartment. And if you've got your guy, let's go. I'm ready to go. Damn ready."

She was half out of the booth. I took her arm and I drew her back. "I've got something to tell you. Something lousy."

She looked at me, then she sat down. She pulled her arm out of my hand and she put her own hand over it. Her nostrils flared and stayed that way, pinched out. "What's the matter with you?"

I looked at the vegetables. I said, "Mona."

"What about Mona?"

"She's been . . . hurt."

"Pete."

"I found her on the floor in your apartment."

"Pete . . ."

"She was shot, from very near, through the right eye."

For a moment there was nothing, then the blood fell out of her face and the circles of rouge were like fever-spots of hilarity on a painted clown. She stared at me, her eyes big and shabby with horror. "Pete," she whispered.

I waved at the waiter. "Brandy. Doubles."

She didn't say anything.

She finished her brandy.

"I'm sorry," I said.

Quietly she said, "Pete, look . . . that kid . . ."

"Slow down."

"Look, Pete. I practically raised that kid. I'm about thirteen years older than she is. I taught school once, back there, in a hick town in Montana. She was a pet of mine, my favorite. Since she was nine. An orphan. Lived out at my house . . ." Her voice went away.

"What about her?" I said.

"When I went East, we corresponded.

Continued on page 146

James Crow and his neighbors toasted Kentucky's first

IRON HORSE *in 1835*

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Then she came on to New York. Grown and beautiful. And wild. Wonderfully wild. I couldn't hold her. She was born for this town. Somewhere she met that Little Guy, and she stacked against the easy money, but small town respectability was a part of her. No matter you're a kept woman with a duplex so large it scares you; you're honest if you work for a living. So she worked in that dance hall. Regularly and consistently. We went our separate ways for a while. Then she got in touch with me and offered me the lower half of that apartment. Lonesome. I wanted an apartment, and you know what it's like trying to get an apartment. She wouldn't take a dime from me. She couldn't, she said; *she* wasn't paying for it. I knew all about that kid. Everything."

I gave her a cigarette. I gave myself a cigarette.

Suddenly she said, "You sure? Pete . . ."

"Take it easy, Madeline. I'm sure. Something else. The bag wasn't there."

She wasn't interested.

She smoked nervously.

Brandy gave new background to her rouge.

"You've got to tell me about that bag," I said. "I think she was killed because of the bag."

"All right. I'm not violating any confidence now. Mona asked me to retain you to find the bag. She gave me the money. And she wanted *you*, specifically. She had heard about you, she said. She didn't want her name mentioned, under any circumstances."

For a moment it made sense. Then it was crazy. Mona Crawford was the Little Guy's girl friend. So he gets her to get Madeline to hire me to look for it. That would make sense. But it was crazy: *because at that time the Little Guy didn't have to hire anybody to look for it. He had it.* Then I remembered. There was a middle guy. Somebody else had had that bag. For a very short time. In between possession by Viggy and possession by the Little Guy, there had been possession by another, principal or emissary, transient as a floating crap game, but possession—until a soft conk on the head had helped him relinquish it.

Then something clicked inside of me.

Stingily and tinily.

But suffocatingly.

I let it wait. I said, "What happened after I brought you the bag?"

"I called Mona and I told her. She came home. I repeated your grisly story and I told her we were to wait for your friend. I was frightened. For her. I asked her about it. She wouldn't tell me. She was upset. Then Olafson called me with this thing. I left it with Mona. She promised to wait for you. She was very much interested. I didn't worry. Wild, yes. But ruggedly honorable, when it was important."

She closed her eyes. She drooped like a drunk's cigarette.

It clicked again. Urgently.

I've got a sweetheart and a boy friend. Now, I've got you. Too.

Very slowly I said, "Look, that thing. 'To Mad, with love' on your cabinet. You didn't know the guy after all?"

She didn't open her eyes. She didn't answer.

"You did that for your protégé. Probably one of the reasons she wanted you to live there. Sort of decoy in case of trouble. If the Little Guy ever walked in on them, upstairs; well, he's Madeline's boy friend, not mine. Just kind of keeping him company up here, and if you don't believe it, come on downstairs, and ask Madeline. If she's there. Look at the photo down there—'To Mad, with love.' Be yourself. Right girl, wrong guy."

I said, "Well?" and I slithered my toes around in my sweating socks.

She opened her eyes. Tiredly she said, "Something like that. Why shouldn't I play along with the kid?"

Then, of course, it broke.

It hit me in the head. Hard. All of it. It broke and it hit me in the head and it splintered all over me like a red rocket at carnival. It clattered inside of me like I'd swallowed a roller coaster. "Come on," I said. "Let's get. You're going to scoop this old town. Exclusive and sensational. If you want to go. It could be dangerous."

2

In the cab, she said, "Did you call the police?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I don't want to mess it up. Yet."

"It's horrible."

I let her cry, quietly.

I tapped on the glass panel and I slid it away and I said, "Jackson, you will go up Sixth and make a right turn at Fifty-ninth. You'll go slow across to Fifth. I'm looking for somebody."

Sure enough: parked out against the curb at right angles to the long canopy in front of my fancy apartment house, to the consternation of the doorman with more gold braid than an admiral and to the utter detriment of the sweep and flourish for gratuity—a broken-down Plymouth with a couple of the boys. The roof light was on: McArthur was looped behind the wheel working on his ulcer with a fat black stogy, with McMahon beside him, working on his bank account with the *Morning Telegraph*.

We rolled, and I told Jackson to stop at the Plaza. I went in and I used the phone. I called downtown and I got Homicide and then I got Parker.

"Parker," he said.

"Chambers," I said.

Silence.

"Louis," I said. "I want you to get on that two-way dingus of yours and call off the boys."

"What boys?"

"McArthur and McMahon."

"Because why?"

"Because I've got that thing wrapped up for you. The three stiffs in the automobile."

"What?" he said.

"Yes," I said.

Silence.

Then he said, "How do I know?"

"Christ. Please. Don't be a cop. You and I have had business before. I'll have this packaged for you before tomorrow this time. Way before, I hope. Just give me room. Room, partner, to move around in. Take those guys away from my house."

Silence again.

Then, "Hokey dokey."

"Hokey dokey?"

"Hokey dokey, sucker."

"Thanks, I'll be seeing you."

"You better."

Outside, I took Madeline out of the cab.

"That's all," I said to Jackson.

"Sure," he said. "Because it's stopped raining."

It was cold; brisk wind rubbed at our ears. Madeline put her arm through mine and we walked back toward Sixth. I left her under the canopy. I pushed my head through the open window of the Plymouth and I said, "How's it, fellers?"

"Look who's here, Mac."

"Son of a bitch," said Mac. "And where do you think you're going?"

"Home. But first, out of courtesy, I stick my head in and say how-do."

Mac said, "That's what you think, chum."

The other Mac said, "Boss wants to

see you urgent."

"That's canceled."

"Says what?"

"Listen to your radio."

"Calling car sixty-nine . . ." the voice said, scratchy like burning bacon.

"Sixty-nine," I said. "Shame on you."

The radio told them to check in. Assignment off.

"See what I mean?" I said.

"Wise guy," said Mac.

"Wise guy," said the other Mac.

3

I was a grey face with bristles in the mirror of the silent push-button elevator and I wore a patch that I hardly remembered and I had bagals around my eyes. Madeline Howell was an enigmatic white profile with teeth over a lower lip.

Upstairs, I moved.

I hustled like a housewife with a flyspray.

I took her things, and mine, and I put them away. I fixed a chair behind the door and I told her to sit in it. I sneaked a rapid vapid drink in the kitchen, and another. I brought a gun out of the bedroom and I unclicked the safety latch and I gave it to her. She held it like you hold a fork when you're toasting marshmallows over the gas range for the picnic in the parlor.

"You know how?" I asked.

"What?"

"How to use it?"

"Yes. I suppose. You pull the trigger."

I was reassured. "You don't pull unless you have to pull. Then you pull like hell. Check?"

"Check."

I snapped the lock on the door to leave it open and I went all the way across to my desk. I wanted him to see me directly, when he came: his back would be to her. My fingers produced restless drum taps on the desk. Then they stopped, frozen in a ouija-spread. Silence. Nothing. And Madeline Howell behind a door, a deep crease between her eyes and her mouth like a kiss and her legs tight together and a nervous gun pointing at me. Where the hell was he?

Street sounds drifted in, tense as nighttime noise in an empty house. I drummed on the desk again. I shifted my seat in the chair. Where the hell was he?

The downstairs buzzer rasped like rhonchi out of a dying man. I jumped. Madeline's knees parted, then compressed again. I waved at her with the palm of my hand and I went for the clicker and I pushed it and I came back to my chair. We waited, and I didn't like it. It didn't figure. It didn't figure for him to be polite and push all the buzzers. It figured for him to get to me fast and quick and unexpected.

We waited.

Knuckles whisked at the door.

Ants ran on my spine. "Come in," I said.

The door opened, obliterating Madeline Howell.

Ralph March!

Chapter XXII

Wrong guy and anticlimax.

"What the devil," I said, "are *you* doing here?"

"I came . . ."

"I know."

He closed the door. He saw Madeline. "What . . .?" he said. "I beg your pardon." He saw the gun. "Please," he said.

"Well?" I yapped.

He flapped his hands. "A social call, really . . ."

"Look," I said. "Not now. Some other time. I'm busy."

He looked from Madeline clutching a gun in the far corner of the room to me balancing myself on the balls of my fingers over the desk, back to Madeline, back to me. "Busy," he squeaked. "*Busy?*"

Suddenly he was hysterical as football spiel over the Saturday radio. "I couldn't stay cooped up any longer. I couldn't sit tight. I had seen that girl. I had seen Hale naked and dead in the morgue. Honest to God, I'd never seen a dead body before in my life. I'm all scratchy inside. Every creak in the room lifted screaming hackles all over me. I'm shot, I tell you. I'm crawling with nerves. I went out for a walk. Then I thought I'd come talk to you. Even if I had to wake you. Checked with the phone book. Please, may I have a drink?"

I got up and I went to the kitchen. I poured him the biggest drink of his life. Then I rattled a pheno out of a bottle. I rattled out two. One for me. I had mine with a gulp of his whiskey and I went back to the living room. I said, "Ralph, I know just how it is. But right now we're expecting company. Here's a pill and here's medicine. We'll talk later."

He listened to the doctor. He ate his pill and he drank his whiskey.

"You're a good boy," I said. "Now get the hell out of here."

Firmly he said, "No, sir."

"Ralph," I said.

"I just won't go back to that hotel room. I'm shot, man. I tell you . . ."

"Ralph."

"No, sir."

That was that.

So I clipped him.

I removed Ralph March from the middle of my stratagem.

I carried him into the bedroom and I put him on my bed and I took off his shoes. I didn't have time for the niceties. I rolled up some toilet paper and pushed it past his lips and bound it down with a handkerchief. I tied his hands and feet with tasseled rope off two bathrobes and I attached him to the bed. I had done him a service. What with pheno and a hooker of rye to end all hookers and a rap on the jaw, he figured to slide from unconsciousness into restful slumber. It would be good for his nerves. I patted his feet, and I went back to drumbeats on the desk top and Madeline Howell.

Where was he?

He had opened the bag and he had found sand.

So he knew I had them, because I had brought the bag to Mona via Madeline. He knew I hadn't delivered them: not with Viggy visiting on Lexington Avenue because the law had three dead bodies to paste on him like cockamamies—so I had them, or I knew where they were; and then I knew why he wasn't here yet. He was packing. He was arranging. He was setting it up. Because this was the kiss-off. He had played it all the way, the hard way. It had got messed up in the middle, and then he thought it had straightened out; then Mona had moved up in his way and it had got harder and tougher than ever, but going back could no longer be, because going back was despair and death, so he had shoved a bullet through her eye in the one last necessary miserable unforeseen necessity—and he was out from under. *Then sand.*

So this was to be the kiss-off: and he had known it while the sand had stung at his eyes and he had kicked at a futile suitcase and the grit of bastard words had scratched at his throat.

Me.

He could take his time. He could make all of his preparations. It had finally funneled down. Me.

Continued on page 148

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to your "Lovely"!

Send her GORGEOUS FLOWERS-BY-WIRE!

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At better department stores everywhere

Drumbeats on the desk top.

A hell of a situation.

A guy with nothing to lose—and me.

And I like to keep on living (do you blame me?): I like the lights and the music and the melody of the whispers. Melody of whispers. Apple-pie cute, but that's it. We eat, drink, sleep and make babies. That's the heavy music and the blare of lights. That's what we cling to, clawingly. But that's not why we steal tapestries and stick knives into people and blast out their eyes, and are as wary as a bustard about our own skins. It's a cut beneath that: the melody of the whispers: what we don't talk about and hardly even know we feel—like what we dream about in the cool of the early evening by the sea; like the music of the waltz that reminds you of nothing, but brings the prickle of tears about your eyes; like the agitation, after the fifth highball, about the brunette you will never see again, with the hurt sorrowful eyes; like the can't-happen knight on a white charger you dream about as a girl; like the sweet thoughts about the old man, your husband, still as death beside you in sleep, a stranger you observe and love, leaning on your elbow; like the feel of the little boy in pajamas bleary-eyed in the parlor, the feel of soft rain in the woods in the summer, the feel of the wet puckered kiss of a child . . . the melody of the whispers . . .

How the hell do you like that?

A shamus with nut philosophy. And look when.

A guy beating the hell out of a desk top, staring at a wretched Madeline Howell, waiting for a murderer . . .

Then the doorbell ringing. Thinly. Upstairs.

Denny O'Shea, a-calling. From on top: no buzzer downstairs. He's going to wake the guy out of a dream. Like it's supposed to be. Fast and quick and unexpected.

I crossed him. I said, "Come on in, Denny."

2

He wore a grey double-breasted topcoat and a grey Homburg and his eyes were blue craters with wrinkles, laugh wrinkles; his eyes were always laughing: at himself, at me, at God, at something. They were laughing now, but they weren't having fun. His face was white as a fresh baseline at the ballyard and his right hand in his coat pocket was the traditional lumped-up bunch with a point. He pushed the door closed with his elbow and he moved in a foot and he stood there. He said, "Gimme."

"I know," I said, "what you want, and I have them."

"Maybe."

"Tapestries."

"Correct and right now."

"You want to know how I know?"

"No."

"I'm going to tell you. Anyway."

The point in the coat got pointier.

"I'm not interested."

"Look what Madeline's got."

"*What?*"

"Right behind you, a little to your left."

He didn't move. He didn't say anything. He stood there.

"Look what I got, the man says," Madeline said.

He smiled tight around the mouth, lax and weary around the eyes. He moved like a cripple; small shuffling backward steps until his back was flush with the door. Then he looked at her quickly, and back to me. Now he moved toward her sidewise and he stood above her and looked down at her and he saw what I saw: that she held the gun like a fistful of cup custard, squashily. He slapped it out of her hand and it bounced once on the carpet and he dug the thick .45 out of his pocket.

"Over there," he said, tiredly.

Fustily Madeline said, "I *beg* your pardon."

"Over there. On the couch. *Please.*"

Madeline was distraught and indignant, but smart-alec by the desk was stiffer than an m.c. at the two o'clock show. With fear. Smart-alec by the desk was more than passing acquainted with the jangle of that "please." Please wasn't please, please wasn't gallantry; please was a wrench out of nerves, a parched plea and a slap of threat; please was movement out of a pushed-in corner, physical, a thrust of action: please could just as well have been unhappy pressure on a trigger.

Denny O'Shea was tired and wired: Denny had crawled a long way through the sewer pipe and there was daylight up ahead, and when you're clawing for daylight like Denny was clawing, you had to scrape anything out of your way or you had to take it along with you.

"Sit on the couch," I said to Madeline.

"You too," Denny said.

We sat on the couch.

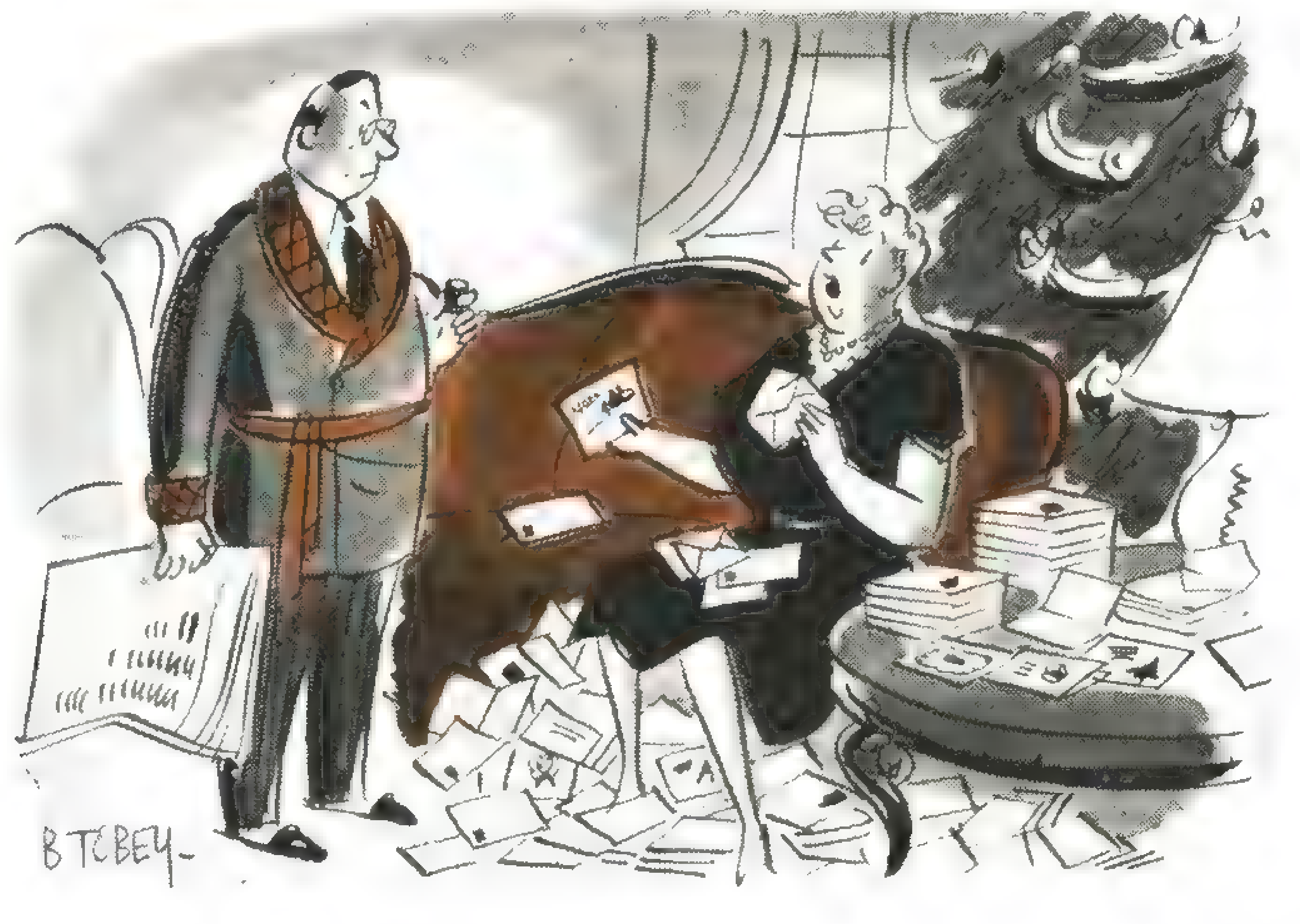
He pulled my gun over with his foot, stooped and got it and put it in his coat pocket. He opened the buttons of his coat and he sat down in Madeline's chair. He pushed the Homburg back on his head and the hair jumped up from the top of his forehead, red-blonde and shiny.

"Gimme," he said.

"It's no good, Denny."

"Gimme anyway."

"It's no good. It needs a deal."



"We didn't receive a single card from the people we sent cards to—these are from those we didn't send to"

"Deal?" he said.

"Suppose I give. What happens? Nothing happens. You have your brother after you, and his organization. You have the Little Guy after you, and his organization. You have cops after you, and that organization. You can't trade with Vyseuseau: it tips off everybody. Plus he wouldn't trade with you anyway because it happens he's tied in with the Little Guy. So you'd be a lamster with tapestries and for all the good they'd do you, you could hang them in your toilet to make it look pretty. Relax, Denny."

The tight breath in my chest hurt against my ribs. I looked at Madeline. Madeline looked at Denny. Denny looked at me. A chary expression got mixed up with the permanent tired laughter in his eyes.

"Deal?" he said.

"Deal," I said.

"Who pulls it?"

"Me."

"Why?"

"I'm entrepreneur."

"What's entrepreneur?"

"The guy in the middle."

"What middle?"

"The fix guy."

"For what?"

"For ten per cent. From everybody."

The .45 wavered. I was getting through.

"Look," I said. "It could have been cops behind the door instead of Madeline."

That helped.

Cops. Lawyers call it a scintilla of evidence—what I did not have. Only Mona could have tied him to the three stiffs in Viggy's house; at least Mona could have shown he was interested. But now there was no Mona to tie him. So there would have been Peter Chambers with a tall and fulgent tale, but without what the lawyers call a scintilla of evidence, and they'd have hauled him down under the lights in the hard room and they'd have squeezed him all the way from no cigarettes to maybe a rubber garden hose, but even the specie of barrister known as shyster to the trade would have bargained him out of there on a writ faster than you could entice a two-bit baby with a hundred dollar bill. And meantime to the sum total of no avail, look at all the characters I'd have to drag into it and how much they would hate me, which wouldn't be at all good for the business and the roaring prosperity that has been declared to be fast upon us.

Cops.

But it helped.

The bulging side of the .45 slept on his knee.

I kept flinging the words: "I know the whole setup. Right from the start. I know too that you got Mona to get Madeline to retain me, and I know how you figured it. You figured I'd turn it down, which would mean, naturally, that Viggy retained me for that purpose. So you would hire yourself a couple of ops to play close-tail on me, so you could stay on the ball. And if I didn't turn it down, swell, I'd be working for you. I didn't turn it down. Which meant that Viggy, at least temporarily, was handling the bag proposition himself. So you had me working for you, and you've got confidence in me, your big brother's been using me a long time. You knew I'd ring Viggy in on it somehow; but through me you'd be staying as near to the valise as possible, and when you thought it was right—you'd hit. That's why you went up to the Square Deal Club with me: you heard me tell the Butcher that the Little Guy thought I had it. So, maybe by sticking around close, maybe I'd ask you to do me a favor; to pick up the bag somewhere, to deliver it to Viggy later. Something like that."

He didn't say anything.

I said, "How'm I doing?"

He picked up the gun. It wasn't the same. It was a gesture without tension. The lines around his mouth had slacked off. The frozen laughter around his eyes wasn't terrifying. He said, "What's that got to do with a deal?"

"We've got a set of tapestries, and we've got a set of thieves. That's easy for a deal."

"How?"

"There's been pick-up and hijack all the way."

"So?"

"Everybody'll play."

"How?"

"The guy will pay two and a half million buckeroos."

"I know all about that."

"Genuine dough."

"For Christ sake."

"Like this. There's the Little Guy, there's Vyseuseau, there's Viggy, there's you and there's a guy Ralph March."

"There's a guy—who?"

"Ralph March."

"Who the hell is he? Ralph March."

"Nobody, except the guy that's the true owner of the whole works. He was Hale's partner, all legal with papers, survivor take all if one of them passes. And Hale passed, as you know."

He didn't smile. It wasn't funny.

"So how does it work?" he said.

"Everybody wants a piece. A peaceable piece. Right now nobody's got them, except you. I've got them and you've got a gun on me, so, in substance, you've got them. We call in the boys for conclave. Split five ways, there's a half million each. Nobody can kick. Viggy gets what he would have got anyway—and the rest of them pick up a half million out of nowhere like a Christmas present. Except for the ten per cent off the top. For me. Because I'm entrepreneur."

He liked it.

He stamped it with the oldest seal of approval. "How do I know you don't cross me?"

"That's easy. I'm not law. I'm a businessman. I've been retained by Ralph March to try and recover the stuff for him at ten per cent. That would be ten per cent of two million, because Viggy would have to get paid—that is, if it worked out clean. This way we've got a compromise arrangement. But the dear old entrepreneur winds up with more. There's the additional ten per cent of the extra half million which gets thrown into the pot. So why should I cross you? How do you like it, Denny? How do you like conversation about millions?"

He smiled. Right up to the eyes. He said, "Where's your clothes closet?"

I pointed to the foyer.

He stood up. He pushed his cannon into a holster under his jacket. He took off his hat and coat and he went to the foyer closet. *He turned his back on us.*

Denny had come to a decision. He came back. I said, "Let's have a drink."

I went to the kitchen and I brought the bottle and three glasses, water glasses. I brought a syphon of seltzer under my arm. I handed out the glasses and I poured, large ones for them, a small one for me.

"Splash?"

Nobody wanted splash.

"Chaser?"

Nobody wanted chaser either.

I put the bottle of seltzer on the desk.

I said, "Boom."

Denny said, "Cheers."

Madeline said nothing.

I passed around again with the bottle. Madeline sat back and closed her eyes. Denny and I had a refill.

I said, "How did it happen?"

Continued on page 150

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He pinched the point of his nose. "Were you ever a younger brother? The stupid one? The one that couldn't get five nickels change for a quarter?"

"I get it."

"Plus it was dough. The first time in my life I could give it a shake. A real shake. And real dough."

"Sure," I said. "Mona wisens you up to what she heard from the Little Guy. About the big coup he's got planned. Together—you cook it up, and it was fun. For Mona. It was stealing from the stealers, it was pulling a Robin Hood, and then you two would scram for Sherwood Forest and the happily-ever-after. But the kid didn't know you'dhavetopokeknivesintopeople..."

"That's enough." He poured more rye.

I said, "You like the guy."

"Who?"

"Vig."

"Sure. I had it all figured. Squared down. Except for him. I worried about it."

"But you would have let him have it."

"Yes. If I had to. I didn't want to."

"Where'd you get the dame?"

"That was a break. A real break. She came up to my place two days before they got in from L.A. She was the mother of a filly used to work in the Utopia. She needed a stake, a little stake, and she came up to my place to see me about it. We were talking and then bang, she choked up and went blue and then she was gone. That's when I figured it. Strictly a break."

"How'd you pull that?" I said. "It's the only piece I don't have."

He poured a little drink and he nibbled at it. He set the glass down and then he rubbed at his eyes with the heels of his palms and then he brushed fingers through his hair. "I got the idea right away. It figured to work and if it didn't work then he'd have to take his chances just like I was taking mine. I took all the stuff out of the refrigerator, all the grates and stuff. I stripped her and I folded her in. She was there till I found out when they were coming. Two days. That morning I bought a sea-bag and I put her in. I carried her down to the back of the car, drove down and took care of Marmaduke, and then I brought her up to Viggy's house."

He finished his rye. "I pulled the knife across her throat. To make it look good."

"That's all," I said, "brother. I've got to make a call now."

He came very close to me, and stayed there.

I called Scoffol. Scoffol was a patient voice dreary with sleep. I said, "Hiya, pal." Brightly.

"The guy was dead."

"What guy?"

"The guy with the name. Reed."

"I don't suppose you live with a hole like that in your neck."

"Very good," he said. "Good-by."

"We got work, pal."

"Work. Save it for tomorrow. People sleep."

"You save it. Sleep. For tomorrow. For now, we're winding up that Viggy thing."

"Oh,"—but not enthusiastically.

"You pick up Viggy O'Shea at Eighty-three Lexington Avenue, second floor front. You pick up the Little Guy at the Square Deal Club uptown. You pick up Pierre Vyseuseau at the Waldorf. You bring them all here to my place. You bring them alone. Nobody brings assistants. You tell them I've got their junk and that we're going to talk it over. Check?"

"What about hardware?"

"I don't care about hardware. Just no assistants."

"Check. I'd rather sleep. Much."

Chapter XXIII

They sat around like ladies of the culture clubs backed up in front of the big-game jungle hunter, without helmet, lecturing on the love life of the Zulus (with slides). I wanted attention and they gave me attention, all of them, with their heads upslanted and interested.

There was the Little Guy, heinie-bouncing and pale in the desk chair and there was Scoffol directly behind him, one hip on the window ledge, round and florid like a radish on a salad plate. There was Viggy O'Shea on the big blue sofa, grey-faced and black-browed, scraping at the bristles on his chin; and next to him, Madeline Howell, prim and taut; and next to her, Ralph March, doleful as a potted palm in a flea-bite hostelry. There was Denny O'Shea at the other end of the room, neat and tight-skinned and crinkle-eyed in Madeline's hard chair behind the door, and, in a thick-stuffed maroon barrel-chair, Pierre Vyseuseau, rigid as an offended virgin, except that he worked with his teeth like a Chinaman with an abacus, clickingly. And annoyingly.

I walked around for them, in the middle of the room, buzzing like a busy signal with the features of the deal. Calm. Like a great big unfrenzied entrepreneur.

"That's it," I said. "Five ways. Nobody loses."

Viggy O'Shea pulled his eyebrows up over the plaid shadowwork around his eyes and he stopped scraping and he opened his mouth. Then he closed it.

The Little Guy pointed a finger at Denny. "Why him?"

"Two reasons. He's the guy that took it out of Viggy's house in the first place. The guy that your guys took it away from. Didn't you know that?"

"That reason stinks."

"Didn't you know that?"

"No. And I was with the boys."

"So?"

"A schmo mosies out of there with a bag just as we pull up. We clip him and take it. It's a wet dark night. We don't stop to turn him over."

"Reason two," I said, "is better. I took it away from you, but he took it away from me. He's got it now. I talked him into this deal because I think that's the best way all around, and no hard feelings."

Stiffly the Little Guy said, "Maybe. What about him?"

He pointed at Ralph March.

"Him? That's Ralph March. He only owns the stuff. He was partners with Algernon Hale, survivor take all, and he's got good and legal papers full of whereases to prove it."

"Deal," said the Little Guy.

I looked at the rest of them. Nobody said anything.

"Where the hell are they?" Viggy said. "Produce."

"That all right with everybody?"

Nobody said anything.

I said, "Madeline," and I beckoned prettily and she got up and we went to the bedroom. "Downstairs," I told her, "on the street floor there's a nice guy whose name is Dr. Ben Silver. I've got four suitcases parked out in his apartment. Go down there and wake him and bring them up, one at a time; they're heavy. He probably won't let you have them till he checks with me. Tell him to call me on the phone."

Nobody wanted a drink. We sat around, very formal, like front-men for a funeral parlor, and we diddled. It took her a long time. Maybe Doc was a heavy sleeper. It was ten minutes before the phone produced the tinkle. "Yes, Doctor," I said. "It is okay."

Continued on page 155

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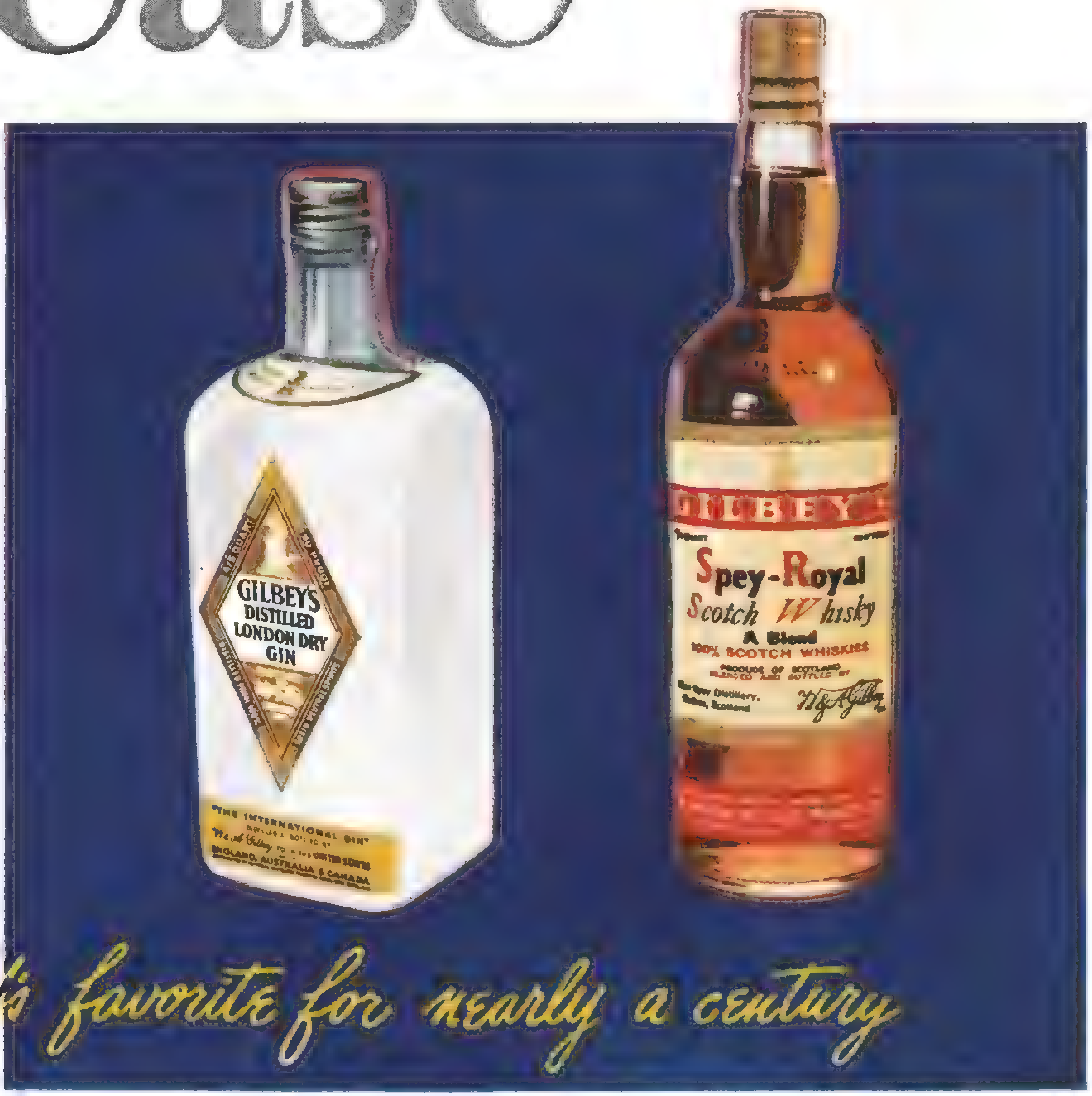
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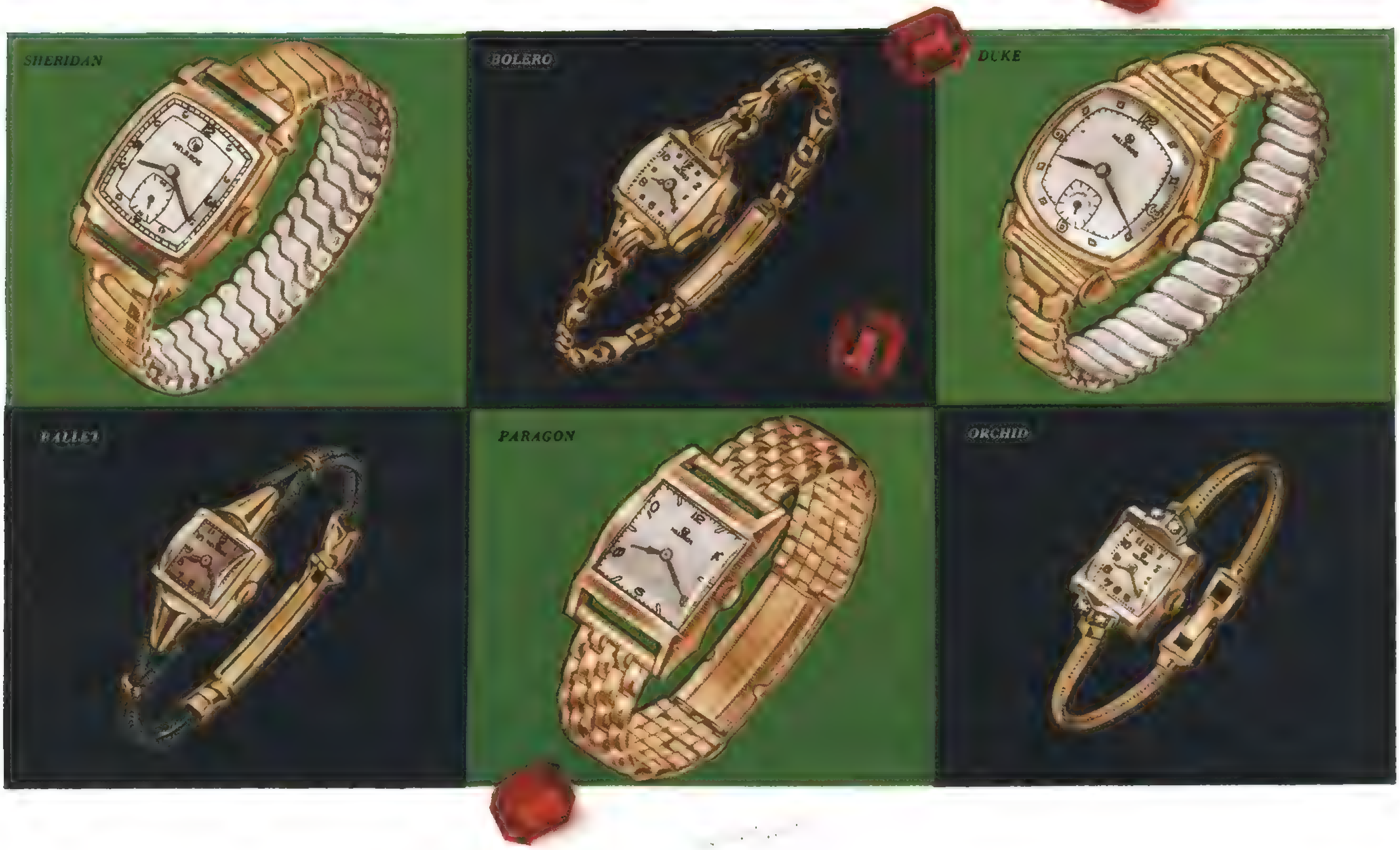

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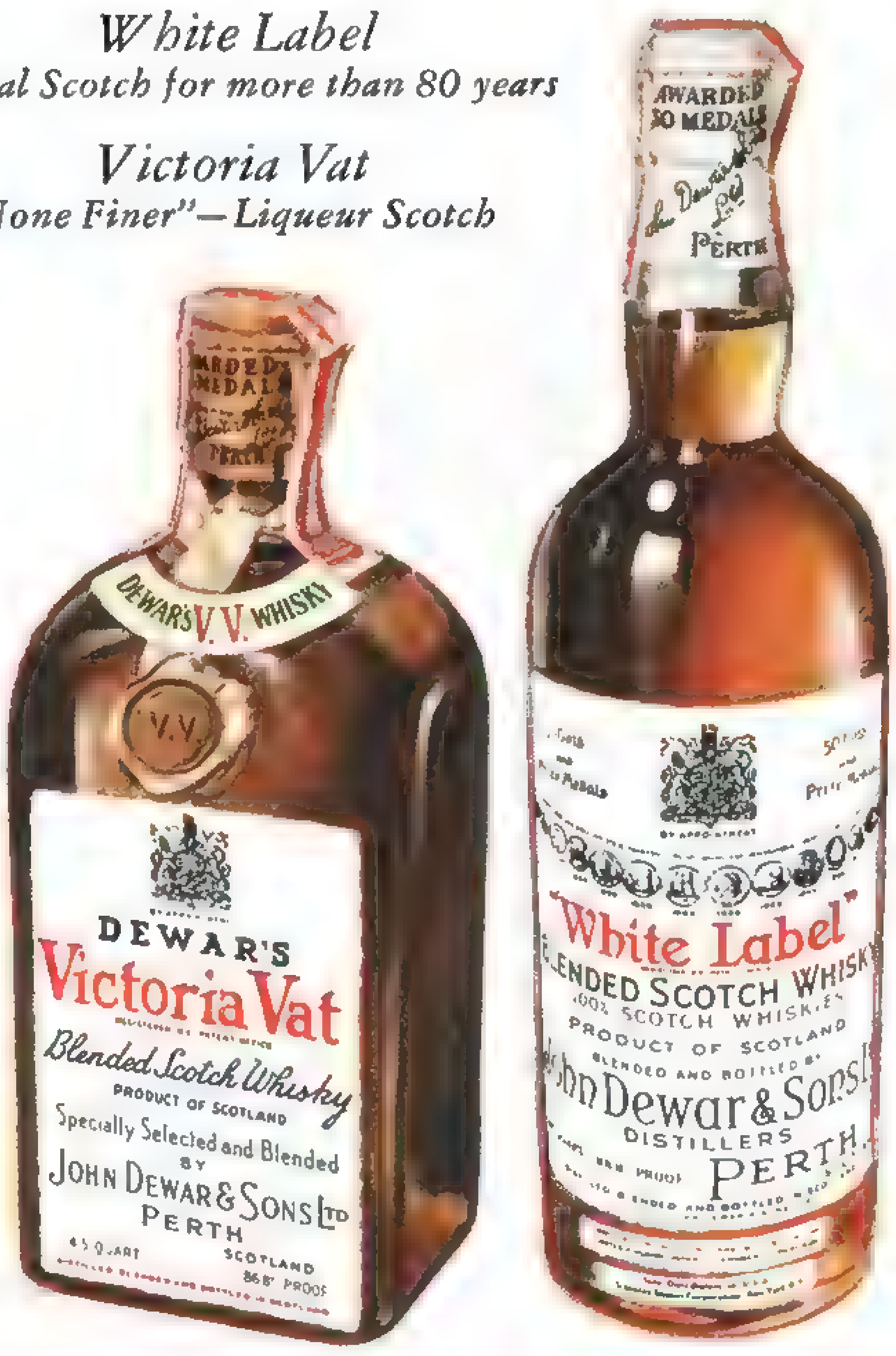
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The doctor sounded worried.

Then Madeline Howell started coming through with valises. We opened the bags and we spread the stuff on the carpet. They looked very good on the carpet. Two and a half million dollars is a hell of a lot of money. They didn't look that good on the carpet. But I'm a private eye (horrible term), I am not an expert on archaic prizes. The expert on archaic prizes was down on his hands and knees peering closely and stroking lovingly.

"Yes, yes," he said. "It is."

Then he went back to the barrel chair and clicked with the teeth. And Madeline Howell, now, of all of us, was biting at her beautiful fingernails and spitting audibly.

"Okay," the Little Guy said. "Only, *he's* out."

He meant Denny.

I liked that. I had a couple of punch lines that needed fitting in.

"Why?" I said.

"He's a cheap little crook. That is why. Plain crook."

It wasn't that. Always on a party like this or even more legitimate parties (like directors' meetings), when the boys get together to slice it up, number one on the agenda is who gets cut out so that the wedges of the pie are bigger. Viggy was a big shot and Vyseuseau was a partner. And Ralph March was clothed in legal cap with red lines along the margins and whereases in the middle, and every racket guy respects the august aura of the legal cap: that and F.B.I. So the Little Guy slapped at the weakling. Hopefully.

I sprang a favorite line. "Who are you? God?"

(But scintillating.)

The Little Guy grumbled, munchingly.

"Look," I said, "the guy made a play, a big play. He knifed two guys to get it and when he got it, you took it away from him. He put a lot of work into this deal. When I picked up the bag downtown, I delivered it to Madeline Howell's apartment and Madeline got Mona to keep an eye on it. Then this guy gets back from your place to the Utopia and there's a message, urgent, that Mona wants to see him right away; but Mona won't let him have it when he gets there, because Mona has learned that it's trouble, murder trouble, so he had to put a bullet into her to take it away again. Now that's a hell of a lot of work for a guy you want to cut out of a deal."

It was a little nickel-plated item.

It was a cute, shining job, pearl-handled and feminine—and the Little Guy was working with it, quick and insolent, one anguished corner of his mouth hooked out of line and trembling. It was rapid-fire and sudden, not even noisy, and it was good-by Denny before Scoffol could knock it out of his hand with the seltzer bottle, and Denny stopped sitting in Madeline's hard chair and he went over face forward with a grunt. Viggy sprawled across and bent in front of him, hiding him from us.

A screen of green passed over Ralph's face (poor Ralph) and he made the usual gasping noises and he toppled, sort of, into Madeline's lap. Pierre Vyseuseau stopped clicking. And the Little Guy writhed over what looked like a broken arm. Then Viggy turned around with the potbellied .45 out of Denny's holster.

"No good," he said. Unconvincingly. He would have pulled it, though. It was largely a matter of protocol.

Scoffol said, "Now don't *you* be a dope," and Viggy said, wearily, "Get out of the way, Mr. Scoffol," and I knew that Scoffol wouldn't, so I edged around to kick it out of his hand, when the rap came. Nobody said, "Come in," but the door was still unlatched and it swung in on us and there we had Detective-lieutenant Parker, large as life and squat as an omnibus, bounded on the right by First Grade Detective Oshinsky and on the left by First Grade Detective Lenihan.

We jelled that way. Telescoped down, it was a picture for the front cover of the Idiot's Crime Gazette with ads in the back for the water pistols. "What the hell?" I said. "What are *you* doing here? Who's writing this story?"

"Very nice," Parker said.

"What the hell?" I said, indignantly.

"Just in case," Parker said, "anybody gets any hot flashes—the place is lousy with cops."

They moved in on us then, streams of them: they all walked around the tapestries except Parker who walked on the tapestries to the clicking consternation of Pierre Vyseuseau.

"All right," Parker said. "Who?"

Madeline Howell pointed unwaveringly. "He."

"Good, good," Parker said, "and dandy. Pants down, this trip, Mr. Little Guy. With delicious reputable witnesses, if you know what I mean. This one is not a gang busteroo."

Then he scuffed at the tapestries and he growled: "What the hell is this? My God, who's your interior decorator?"

"I want to talk to you," I said.

"I want to talk to you too."

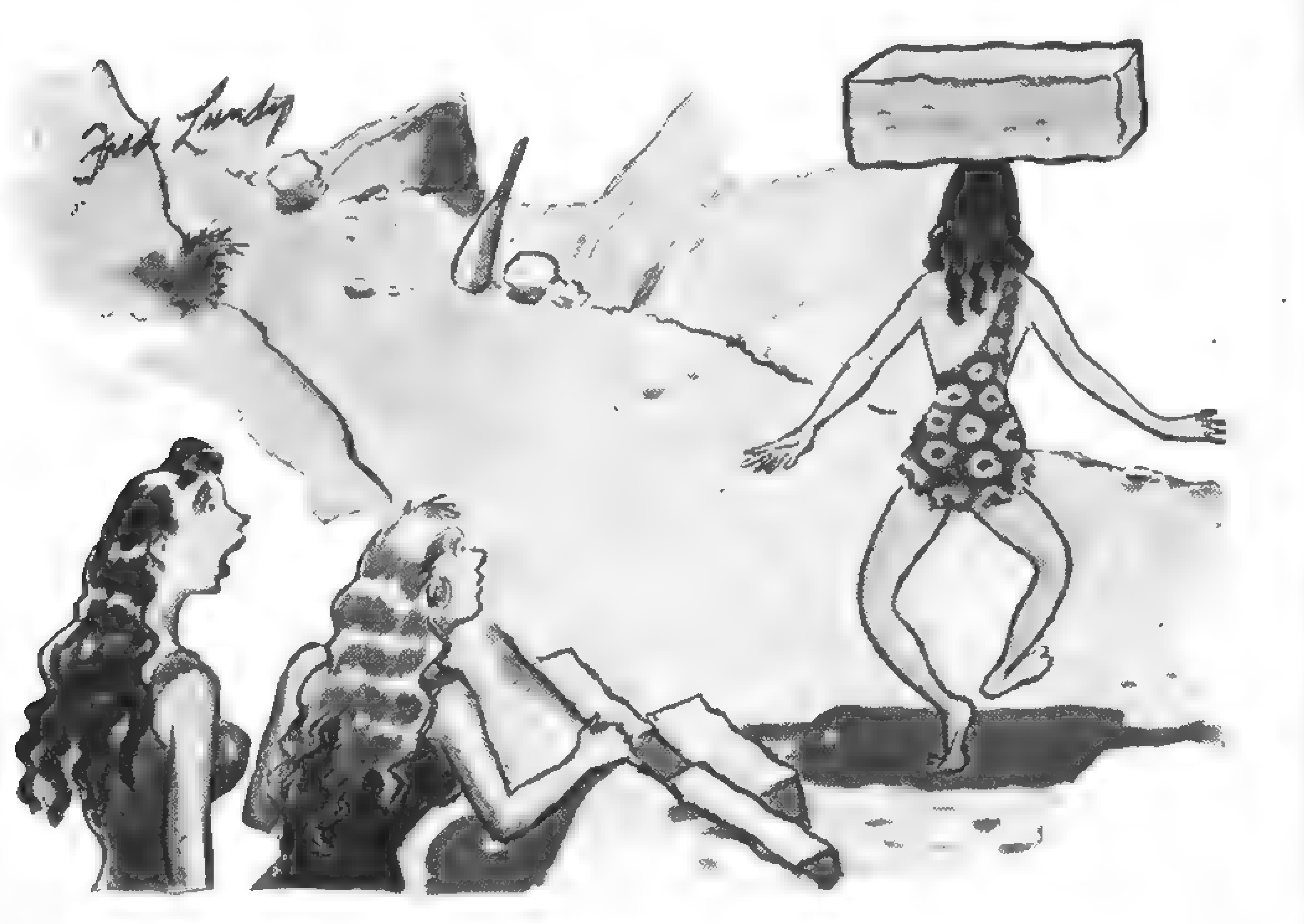
"Come in here."

"Where?"

"The bedroom."

"Bedroom?" he said uplifted in the eyebrows. "Okay. Bedroom. It had

Continued on page 156



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better be good."

He sat down on the edge of the bed with a thin squeak-sigh. "Make it good," he said.

"You're homicide," I told him.

"Remarkable," he said.

"What?"

"I'm homicide."

"Very funny."

"All right. So I'm homicide."

"So you're interested in dead people and how they get that way. So I can clean up the stiffs in the automobile and you can close the file on them. And that Denny O'Shea mess out there."

"*And* Mona Crawford?"

"How do you know?"

"Um," he said.

"*And* Mona Crawford. But I want a favor."

"Um," he said.

"The tapestries on the floor."

"They evidence?"

"In a sense. They're motivation, as I'll explain. But you don't actually need them for evidence. And I don't want them impounded."

"Why?"

"I need them."

"Why?"

"To turn a buck."

"We'll see," he said. "Let's hear."

I gave him the story. The whole story. He asked questions. I answered them. He made notes. He stood up. He said, "Okay, louse. I could be spiteful, but I won't be. Turn your buck."

Back in the living room, the canvas came and went with Denny and they removed the Little Guy and they took down yards of statements from everybody, duly sworn, from Ralph March making investments in tapestries to the Little Guy restlessly plummeting pellets at Denny. "Okay," Parker said. "We'll be in touch. If anybody wants to leave town, he gets permission from headquarters. Good-by, everybody."

We were alone now in the quiet living room, six of us: but the smoke of the cigarettes hung and there was the smell of the many people. I pulled up the Venetian blinds and I brought up a window and a blast of cold clean air came through, and a slant of sick morning sunshine. I looked at my watch. It was twenty minutes after seven o'clock.

"My God," I said. "Look at the time."

Scoffol said, "Close the window."

Viggy said, "How'd he get here?"

Scoffol said, "Who?"

Viggy said, "Parker."

Madeline said, "Me."

Vyseuseau clicked.

Ralph quivered.

I closed the window.

"What do you mean, you?" Viggy said.

"I mean," Madeline said, "me. I mean a filthy murderer killed a girl who was my friend. I mean I was sick and tired of private detectives and fancy gamblers and smart alecky talk bandied about in the living room. I mean that when I went down to Dr. Silver's apartment for the suitcases I called the police and I told them what had happened in my apartment and I told them that I wasn't a genius, but from what I'd seen and heard Dennis O'Shea was a murderer, and that he was at Peter Chambers' apartment on Fifty-ninth Street and Sixth Avenue. I told them who else was here. That is what I mean."

"Oh," Viggy said.

"And now I'm going to tell my paper. Who objects?"

Nobody objected.

She called her paper and she recited, tiredly, what she knew. She hung up. She said, "I'm going now. I'm not going back there. I'll check in somewhere. Good-by, all you wonderful people."

Scoffol said, "I'll take you."

"Thanks."

"I'll be seeing you," I said.

2

Breakfast was whiskey sours and scrambled eggs and whiskey sours and pots of coffee and more coffee. And whiskey sours.

In the living room, I piled the tapestries in tiers in a corner. I smoked and I inspected my company.

Pierre Vyseuseau was a scraggly beard on an unkempt face, stiffly unhappy, in the chair nearest the tapestries. Ralph March was returning from limbo, greenly, in a remote corner of the couch. Viggy roamed the living room, restless and twitchy.

"All right, all right," Viggy said. "How do we wash it up?"

"Like this," I said. "Ralph gets the bulk, you get your agent's commission, and I get ten per cent from Ralph."

"And I?" Vyseuseau said.

"You get glory."

"But no," he said.

"But yes," I said. "But positively yes."

Viggy said, "Let's see that contract."

I showed it to him.

He looked at it. He looked at me. I looked at him.

"How do we know?" he said.

"Look at the guy."

"I've seen dumber looking guys with larceny. Cute larceny."

Ralph stood up on unaccommodating legs. He marched up to Viggy in the slow spread strut of an ancient German general unlimbering toward the bathroom in the morning. He leaned a finger on Viggy.

"Sit down," Viggy said. "Before you fall down."

Ralph withdrew the finger and wriggled for a sneer and he made it; a meek sneer, but a sneer. Then he lost it in a pout, and he did the German general strut back to the couch.

"It's easy enough," I said. "We'd have done it anyway."

"What?"

"Look at the back of the contract."

The back of the contract was thick blue paper folded on top and stapled to the legal cap. It said Ralph March and Algernon Hale, near the top, and near the middle, it said Agreement in spaced letters, and on bottom was engraved Rathbone, Rathbone and Bassett, Los Angeles, California.

"That's one of the biggest firms in the country," I said.

"So?"

"Would they have larceny?"

Dubiously he said, "Well . . ."

"No. They would not have larceny. Not that kind of larceny. Rathbone, Rathbone and Bassett wouldn't climb out on a swaying limb with Ralph March. They can earn it easier. And much safer. Don't be crazy."

"You convinced me," Viggy said.

"But we check to find out if it is legitimate."

"Sure. How?"

"They should have a copy, if it's on the level, word for word and comma for comma. So we call, later, and if they have a copy, word for word and comma for comma—that's it."

"You don't blame me?"

"Of course not."

"It's business."

"Sure."

He sat by the desk and he leaned his head on his hand and he put his fingers in his hair. He twisted at his hair and he stared at the desk. The lines on his face were jet and deep and his mouth was tight and small and morose. He stopped twisting his hair and he tapped his forehead slowly with the knuckle of his thumb. He looked at me with a nothing-glance. I moved my eyes away.

I knew what he was thinking about. He was thinking about Denny being carried away in a lumpy canvas bag with leather handles.

I switched off the lights. The sun was up and the room was bright and the dust showed on the furniture. I said, "We ought to doze, sort of, unless some-one wants more coffee." Nobody answered me. I cleaned up the cigarette butts and then I sat on the couch and I stretched my legs and I crossed my ankles and nobody dozed and nobody talked and all of us made our various trips to the bathroom and years later it got to be half past twelve o'clock and I put through a long distance call to Rathbone, Rathbone and Bassett in Los Angeles.

"Who handled it?" I asked Ralph.

"Rathbone," he said.

When the call came through, I asked for Rathbone. Rathbone wasn't in. I asked for the other Rathbone. The other Rathbone wasn't in. I asked for Bassett. Bassett was in. "Do you know him?" I asked Ralph.

"Yes," Ralph said.

"Mr. Bassett," I said to the thick pre-cocktail voice on the wire. "This is New York. We are attempting to verify a contract. Algernon Hale and Ralph March. Could you arrange that a copy be read to us?"

"Who is this?"

"Peter Chambers."

"I beg your pardon."

"Just a minute."

I motioned to Ralph and Ralph talked with him. Then he put his hand over the mouthpiece. "Someone is going to read it."

Viggy took the telephone and he spread the contract on his knees and he moved his lips while he listened. He hung up in the middle.

"Let us go, little folk," he said.

So we all attended class at the Chase National Bank on Madison Avenue near Forty-fifth Street and it was like it should have been way back in the beginning. The bank people took over the stuff for delivery and a transfer of the wherewithal was effected in favor of a pallid prancing Ralph March who opened an account for that purpose, and Viggy was paid, and Pierre Vyseuseau clicked enviously, and I walked the splendid stone floor, supervising.

Like an entrepreneur.

Which rhymes with manure.

Because I forgot one little detail. *Little* detail.

I forgot to get a check for two hundred thousand dollars from Ralph March, which is what happens when you get stuck on a word and start acting like it.

Entrepreneur.

It isn't too good a rhyme, at that.

Chapter XXIV

Viggy O'Shea said: "How?"

I worried about the mailman.

"How?" he said. "And what are you doing here anyway, ten-thirty in the morning? In your own office?"

"How do you mean that how?"

"That, I don't get."

"I mean is it how, a greeting, like an Indian? Or is it how, a question, laconic?"

Dimly he said, "What should I expect from Petie Chambers at half past ten in the morning? In his own office?"

"Look . . ." I said, ruffled.

"It is how, a question."

Viggy O'Shea was in very fine shape: he was shaved down to gun-metal lustre and he was brown and healthy from sunlamp out of the barbershop. The creases had been slept out of his face and his dark hair glistened and he was redolent of masculine talc and he glowed like grouped Martinis before breakfast. He wore a soft grey suit with expensive shoulders and a pale green shirt and a mean green tie and a froth of surf-green handkerchief. He had his legs crossed in the best and easiest chair in the office.

"I will answer," I said, "the second question first. I am in my office at half past ten in the morning because I am expecting mail. A check. From Ralph March."

"Oh."

"We proceed now to your how."

"Thank you."

"How what?"

He brought out a cigar, bit, spit, and smoked. "How everything. It's two days now since we wound it up. Mostly, I've been sleeping. Then I call up out of bed because I want to know, and you're not home. So I call here, which is funny. And you're here."

"Talent," I said.

"Of course," he said.

Defensively I said, "Talent."

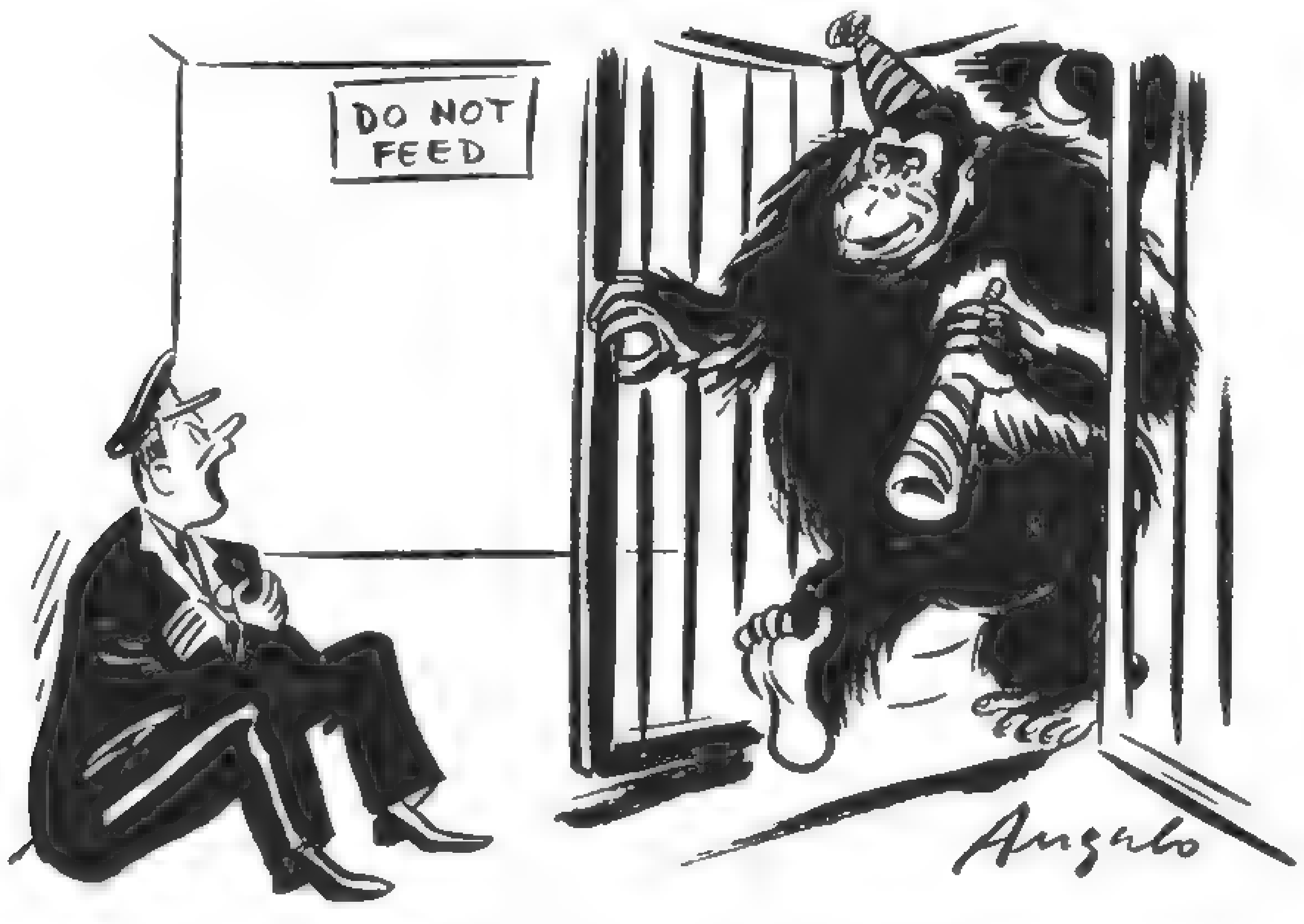
"All right. Talent."

I wedged my legs up on the desk and I settled back in the swivel chair to get comfortable. I took my legs off. You cannot get comfortable when you expect a check in the mail. Ralph March had planed out of town and at first I had thought it was powder. Silly powder. I had a good and binding contract and I'd have banged lawsuits at him like bee-bees out of a shotgun. But it hadn't been powder. It had been business. He had called, yesterday, from the purlieus of the always sunny coast with the gladsome bodings of a check in the mail. So today the first mail had been mostly for Scoffol. For me there had been advices from sundry touts pertaining to the systematic demolition of the bangtails, at varied prices per system, and a letter from a young lady recommended by a friend (she said) inquiring about a position in the office. She enclosed a photo. In a bathing suit.

"Talent," I said, "doesn't mean you're smart."

"Please. It's too early in the morn-

Continued on page 158



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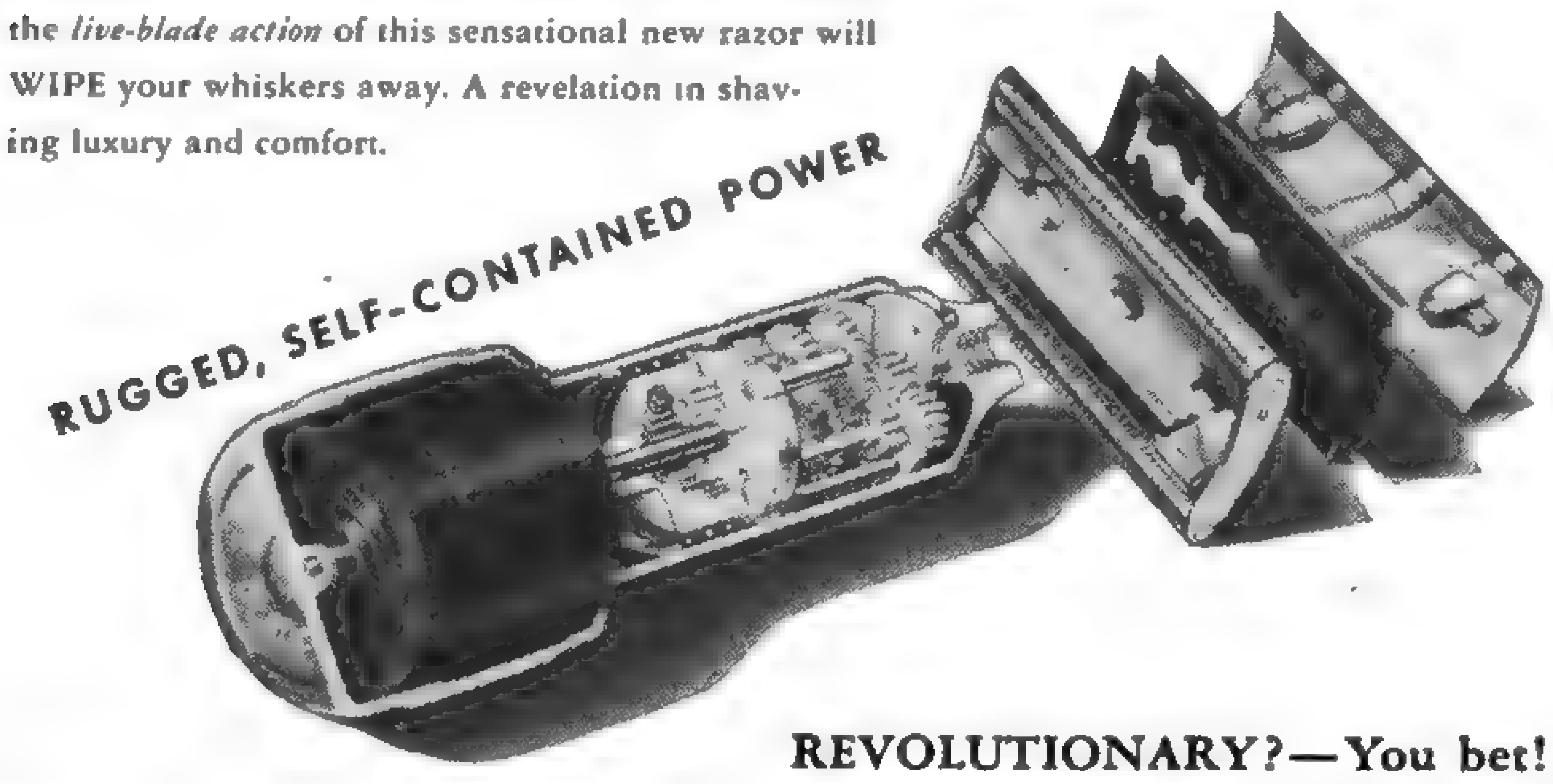

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ing. All I want to know is how."

"Things," I said, "register in your mind. Maybe if you're a genius plus you're smart, they mean something right away. But at least if it's talent, they don't go out of your mind. They stick around and then if something happens that shifts a gear, bang, they mesh, and you're rolling."

"Jesus, all I want to know . . ."

"All right. It was close around you."

"What was close around me?"

"Whoever pulled it. That much you didn't have to be a genius to know. That's talent. But that kind of talent stinks. Because it doesn't mean anything. There are lots of people close around you."

Sourly he said, "Slow. Maybe *you* got talent. I'm only listening."

"There were three stiffs in the house and Marmaduke in knots on Lexington Avenue. So, it had to be someone close enough to you to know when you were expected back *and* that there was a Marmaduke *and* where he lived."

"Right."

"The Little Guy would have been perfect. If one of the three stiffs in the house had been a different stiff."

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning you."

"Too fast," Viggy said, disconsolately.

I made a face at him, a discouraged genius of a detective's face. "He was close enough to the proposition to know when you were expected. He could know you have a butler. He could find out where he lived. So he could have taken care of Marmaduke in the morning, and, if it was laid out well enough in advance, he could be waiting for you in your house, with boys. Then there are three stiffs: Hale, Batesem and *you.* See?"

"Yes, I see," he saw.

"But it wasn't that way at all."

Viggy came up and deposited the cigar in an ash tray and let it smolder. I put it out.

"Furthermore, it would have been a shooting, not a knifing. Knifes are sly. He wouldn't have had to be sly. They'd be waiting to greet you. As it happens, that wasn't the Little Guy's plan at all, probably because he didn't know how many of *your* hoods you had staked out about the house. He probably had one figured cleaner and much less messy. After all, Vyseuseau was *his* boy, not yours. He probably had it figured somewhere for a clean heist, without your even knowing he was involved. Then Denny tripped lightly in, and made it easy for him."

"How?"

"We'll come to it. Then there was that other thing."

"What other thing?"

"The woman in the bedroom with her throat cut and no blood. That's what I mean about sticking in your mind till a gear shifts."

"Slow," Viggy said. "Please."

I came around and sat on the desk in front of him.

"Batesem was a mess. Hale was still warm. But the naked lady had been dead before her throat was cut. Otherwise, they bleed, if you know what I mean. It's not just an open cavity of neck."

He smiled. Weakly. "I know what you mean."

"Did you know it then?"

"No I didn't know it then."

"You were probably too excited. All right, your genius of a detective did know it, and it knocked the Little Guy right out of the running. The Little Guy wouldn't go for embroidery in the bedroom. I didn't understand it. It was crazy. But your genius of a detective did miss, right away, something that would have drawn it much closer around you."

"Yeah," he said.

"Charlie Batesem was nobody's fool. In order to get up near enough to him to cut his throat, hell, you don't figure to be a stranger. I missed that clean. All right . . ."

I told him the whole story. Then I summed up for him.

"So Madeline Howell hires me for a thousand bucks to find the valise. That puts a new wrinkle on it. That spreads it wide open, and I can't figure it at all. And there's that picture of Denny on her liquor cabinet. And I'm convinced they hardly know each other, yet, there it is, bigger than a pimple on your nose: 'To Mad, with love.' So I stumble around chasing up all the alleys like a detective is supposed to do, and then Mona gets killed, and I find that she's the one that hired me through Madeline, and again it doesn't figure, for a minute, and then—bango—it shapes. The gear shifts. It rolls."

"Slow," Viggy said. "Slow. Do it right side up."

"Mona had told me she had a sweetheart *and* a boy friend. All right. The Little Guy is the sweetheart. Who's the boy friend? Who the hell cares? But when Madeline tells me that Mona got her to hire me, strictly me, I get to thinking about the boy friend—just jabbing, and it comes to me, idiot-like, that maybe Denny could be the boy friend because after all, she works for Denny and Denny is all wolf and no sheep and this is a real smart beautiful trick and then I think of the duplex and I think of the picture on the liquor cabinet, and I start to think about Denny Denny Denny—and he fits, oh how he fits."

Viggy kicked at the chair with his heels and started walking. I went back to my seat behind the desk.

I finished it up for him. "He finds out about the deal from Mona. He knows Marmaduke. He finds out when you're due back from Marmaduke, easy and casual, without Marmaduke even knowing he's telling anybody anything. Charlie Batesem knows him well enough to let him get close up. Then he does it on Hale, and so he gets the bag, but the Little Guy shows up as he's coming out and takes it away from him. So he gets Mona to get Madeline to hire me—he doesn't want Mona to do it direct; she's his girl friend; it's too close. So I'm hired, and he's right on top of me. He even pays me a thousand dollars out of the money that's mine. He holds out a thousand from what he's supposed to give me, your money, transfers that to Mona to Madeline to me, and I'm working for him for my own dough. And it explains the dead woman upstairs in the bed."

"How?"

"For the first time in his life, Denny is on something big. But it isn't just that. It is also psychological. It's the little brother putting one over on the big brother. It's the despised misfit outsmarting the big boy. All right. But, if possible, he doesn't want to hurt you. He worries about that. So this woman dies on him of a heart attack. So he figures one. If he gets her up there, it's trouble. And if it's trouble, you'll go looking for me. So he waits outside till you get going—and he pulls it. And if you didn't get going, well, he did what he could to get you out of the way, and you'd have had that knife just like Charlie and Hale. Lucky for you I was too drunk to hear the phone. So don't you ever join up with my critics who insist I drink too much. For you—it was good."

I was finished. I had done it as fast as I could. If there were any loose spots he'd have to pull them together himself. I was through talking about it. My case was closed. Dead people aren't as pleasant to fiddle with as they are to read about. I wished I had a drink. I don't keep a bottle in the office. Surprise?

"Something else," he said.

I knew it was coming.

"Mr. Scoffol is very capable. You should have seen how clever he was about making sure none of the Little Guy's boys tagged along up to your apartment. First he picks me up. We do zigzag in his car all the way up to the Square Deal. I suppose that's in case some of my boys are maybe tagging along. Then he sends me up, personally, for the Little Guy. He waits outside. I'm to walk the Little Guy to the subway. Walk. Your Scoffol leaves the car up there. I convince the Little Guy about no bodyguards, and he and I walk to the subway, and Scoffol walks behind us a way, making sure he catches up with us on the platform and we take the train. Two stops. Then we get out and wait till all the passengers clear off, but we stay there, and then we take the next train for one stop. Then we get out, take a cab to the Waldorf, pick up the frog and come over to your place."

"Elaborate," I said.

"Efficient," he said.

"Careful," I said.

He stopped walking. He pushed a finger out at me. "He could have been just as careful and just as efficient and just as elaborate about seeing to it that the fella didn't carry a gun. *If anyone had asked him to.*"

"I didn't ask him to," I said.

"I know," he said.

"I know you know," I said.

"That's what I mean."

I didn't say anything. I picked up a pencil and I did a doodle on the desk blotter. I kept my eyes on the doodle.

"People," Viggy said, "don't like it when people scrape up with their special girl friends."

I did another doodle.

"People like it even less when people kill their girl friends. I bet you know that."

I did the same doodle over.

"But you made very sure that you told the Little Guy all about that. And you knew he had a gun because you didn't tell anybody he shouldn't have a gun. I know you—that five-man compromise split was strictly turkey trot. The real music came later."

I put the pencil down. I stood up and went to the window. I turned my back to him and I clasped my hands behind my back tight as parting lovers. I said, "The guy killed three people and you were messed up in the first batch right up to the eyeballs and I don't think you could have got out of it. Not after that car business, not with Ralph March swearing they came in with you on the train, not with Vyseuseau swearing he left them in your house. And upstairs, in bed and naked, a woman you couldn't explain, and on a witness stand, when you can't explain, the D.A.'s boys eat it up. All right, so I tell my story about getting them into the car because dead people in the house are poison for you. That brings them back to the house, and they're yours again. Mister, maybe they wouldn't have got you for murder, but they'd have got you for something—unless Denny opened up. And if he opens up, it's a hard wired chair up in Ossining. So I did it the way I thought it should be done. The Little Guy could have saved it up for him, and got away with it. I tried to push it around so that the Little Guy would work in reflex, almost. I knew the way he felt."

Then, very distinctly, I said: "It happened exactly the way I wanted it to happen"—and I waited with my back to him.

There was no sound.

I waited, with sweat on me.

He tapped my fist. He said, "I'll be seeing you."

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning so long, and let's never talk about it again."

Then Miss Miranda Foxworth came through without knocking, as was her wont, which is why I have a sliding bolt on the door. Miss Miranda, squaw-faced and severe, was the only secretary I could work with. Miss Miranda was short and triangular with a sloping corset and a bosom like punched-up pillows.

"The good Miranda," Viggy said, going.

"Hoodlum." Miss Miranda sniffed.

He patted her, nether and rear, and he went away.

"Mail," she said.

I sat down behind the desk. I said, "Ah."

She drew a crumpled envelope out of her long and maidenly rumpled blue sweater and she gave it to me.

It was air mail out of California.

"Ah," I said. "And oo-la-la."

"What's that?"

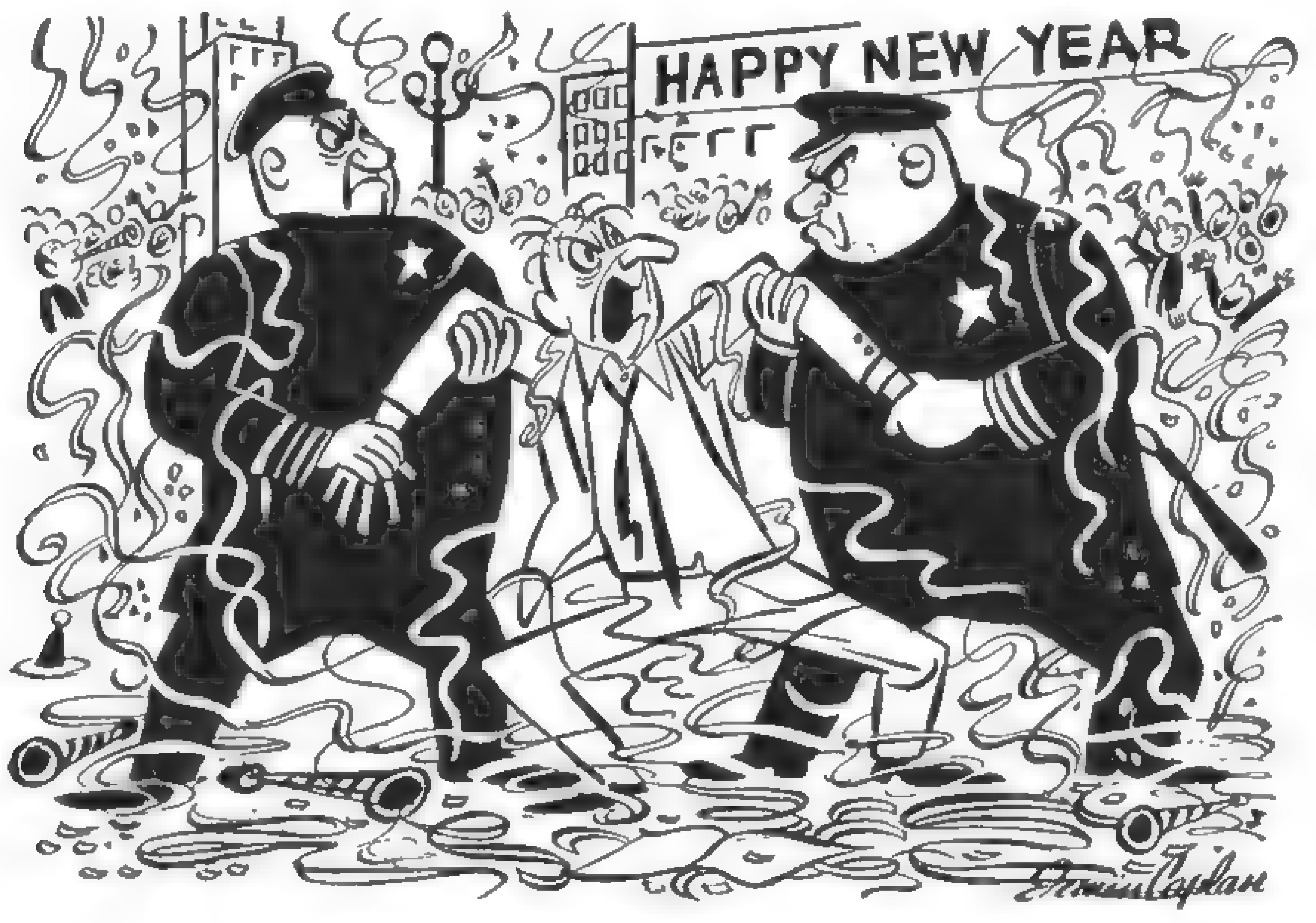
"Influence of the French."

"I wouldn't put it past you."

"Now, Miranda . . ."

She sniffed, flounced, and, corset-heavingly, she departed.

I opened it up and I brought it out. I sighed and I settled my heels on the desk and I gathered in my eyebrows and I stared at the check and I thought about taxes, taxes, dear old taxes; a man just can't get rich. Then I took out my wallet and I inserted the check and I saw the little point of bright yellow card protruding, provocative as the latest thing in evening gowns. I pinched the point and I drew it out and I looked at it, both sides. I sighed, lengthily, but more happily, and I leaned across for the phone . . . ⵌ



"I think I should be allowed a little extra spree—I'm a street sweeper an' have to clean up this mess tomorrow"

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Formally Correct

These festive nights require a grooming technique that's perfect in every detail

by **O. E. SCHOEFFLER**

Dressing for nocturnal activities usually begins with your choice of tie. Of course, the tie depends on the degree of formality attached to the event, and so "black tie" or "white tie" is your cue to the clothes you'll wear.

While midnight blue or black tailcoats are not plentiful at the moment, much progress is being made in the manufactories, and more men are able to buy just what they prefer in evening clothes types. So if your evening-wear wardrobe needs replenishing, you may get an idea or two in the following paragraphs.

First in the minds of most men is the double-breasted dinner jacket that has grosgrain facing on peaked lapels. Many men, however, stick to the single-breasted style that exposes a greater area of shirt front. There may be a nuance more formality there, but for definite formal flavor in dinner jackets (single- and double-breasted), there's a shawl-collar arrangement that's usually finished with lustrous satin or other fabric.

The preferred style of collar to wear with tailcoats has large-size tabs and is usually described as a bold-wing collar. It should be high at the back of your neck and sloped forward, thus showing a good band of white "linen" above the tailcoat collar. A white tie patterned after the butterfly has great acceptance, and is sometimes made of birdseye piqué to match the stiff bosom of the dress shirt. The shirt, incidentally, requires plain white pearl studs and links to match. But as in all masculine dress, personal whims carry considerable weight and you'll occasionally see gold studs and links, and they'll be in good taste too.

Whether you wear a single- or double-breasted waistcoat of white piqué is up to you. The short pointed single-breasted style seems to swing the most votes, possibly because current tailcoats are high-waisted, and the front of the coat should cover the waistcoat.

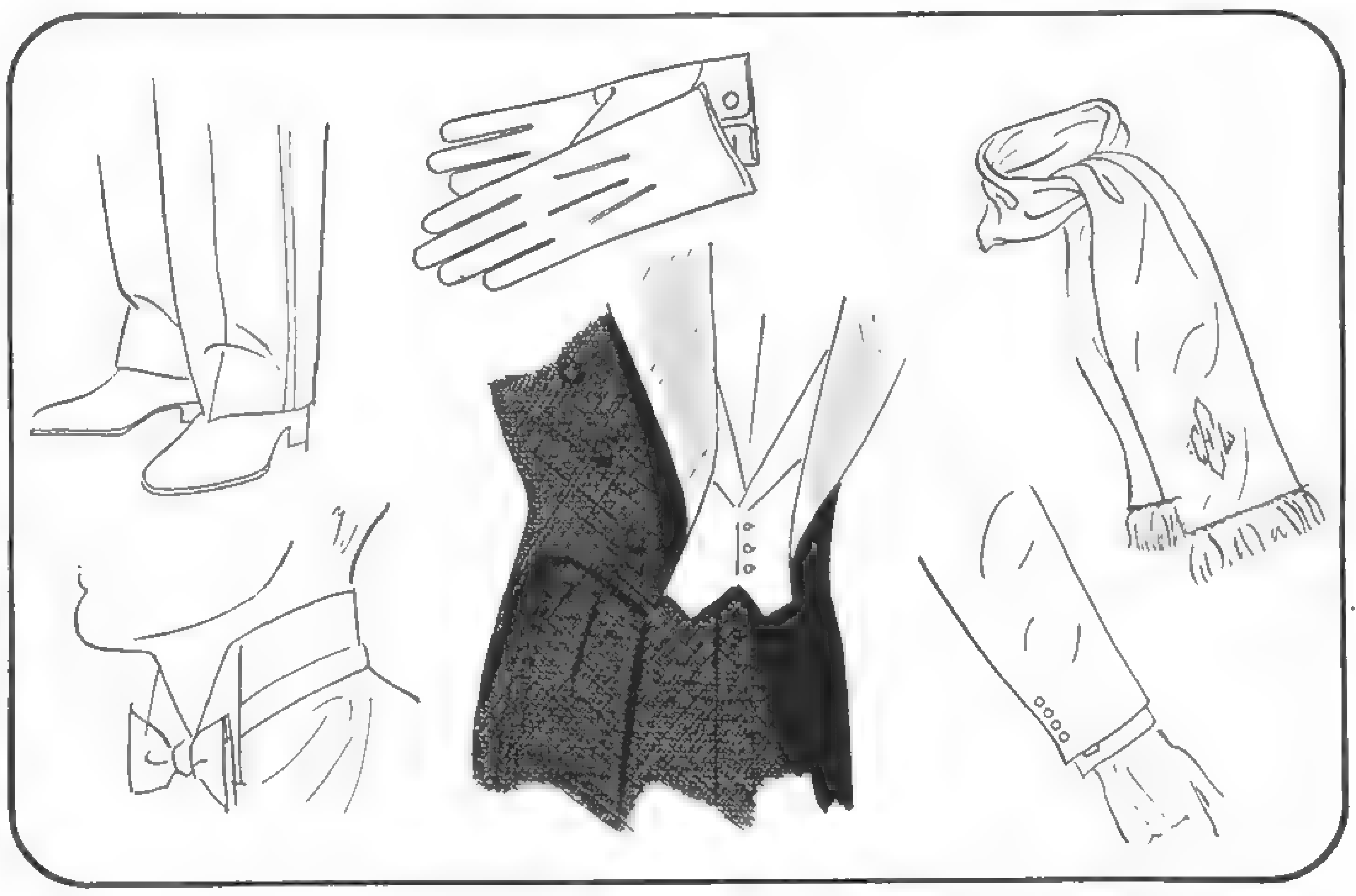
As for dinner-jacket accessories, plain or pleated bosom shirts are in order as are attached or separate fold collars. The long pointed collars you see are attributed to the California influence, but most of the collar styles have moderate spreads between points of medium lengths.

Your choice of dinner-jacket ties is wide and if you show up in one with a straight shape, or a pointed end, or a semibutterfly model in either black or midnight blue, you'll be correctly groomed. A similar range of choice exists in studs and links.

Present dictates say the cummerbund in midnight blue is correct with either single- or double-breasted dinner jackets. Some wearers of the double-breasted type jacket omit the waistcoat, but it is preferable to wear one of midnight blue or black fabric.

As for other necessities, complete the picture with black socks and low patent leather shoes or pumps. And if your choice for the evening has been the tailcoat then you require a white silk or rayon muffler, and white gloves. Here too, you'll need a lustrous silk or dull grosgrain collapsible opera hat, which incidentally are still in short supply. Dinner-jacket headwear is more plentiful and a black or midnight blue Homburg gives the approved touch.

Of course there are any number of other items you'll find on a man dressing for an evening on the town, such as white handkerchiefs, a key chain, a gold or silver cigarette case and lighter. Heading that list of items would be a notation to take your billfold, containing an ample supply of coin of the realm to take care of the evening's merriment. ##



Silhouette of a Displaced Personality

Continued from page 50

stoutly denies that this ever happened, but he is vastly outnumbered by those willing to depose that it did.

Borra had begun the confounding of dignitaries on a parlor-pastime basis as far back as prewar days in Yugoslavia when he had, by command, stolen King Peter's watch, to that young monarch's mingled puzzlement and admiration. For it was after the king's chamberlain had seen and described Borra's performance in a Belgrade night club that he had been invited to the palace, and all the king's attendants had been alerted to watch for any suspicious actions on his part.

Such alerting of onlookers only helps Borra, who is not at his best until under the stimulus of careful, and preferably expert, observation. For that matter he attains the upper reaches of virtuosity in his thievery only when he has had his victim's suspicions and watchfulness aroused.

That's why the more sophisticated the audience the greater Borra's success in diverting their attention. And that's why, now that Borra is practicing his bizarre blend of magicianship and thievery on a fine-art level in at least two Vienna night clubs every evening, he has finally stooped down at least halfway to the routine of enlisting stooges. Not really stooges, but rather repeaters. That is, Borra will make a point of failing to lift—or rather of letting some one victim catch him in the act of trying to lift, his wallet or watch. He will then compliment this attempted and still-intended victim on his exceptional perspicacity, entreat him not to let others at surrounding tables know the secret of Borra's act that apparently he alone has been astute enough to solve, etc., until he has his man feeling that maybe he is, at that, at least Borra's equal in this business, if not indeed his master. Then later, much later, and only after meanwhile having stolen something and returned it to resounding applause from virtually everybody in the night-club audience, Borra will return to his one failure, re-engage him in conversation, and in a matter of seconds will have him purring with complacency upon hearing how he alone has seen through a trick that Borra has practiced without detection upon the police heads and chief of detectives of a dozen countries. Borra is prone to ask his man if he is not by chance a detective himself or was he not perhaps engaged in some highly specialized cloak-and-dagger secret-agent activity during the late hostilities? Oh, no, the highly pleased and flattered interviewee will respond: no, he's not a detective, but—and unless he's one in a million he will sooner or later admit that he's always been pretty observing—and then Borra pounces. Immediately he tells the audience at large, from whom he has lifted so much without their once catching him at it, that here's somebody who caught him in the act, somebody shrewd enough that he couldn't be fooled, somebody who will now, he is sure, for their collective benefit, show them how a pickpocket can be foiled, and by this time Borra has himself, a chair, and his drafted stooge, all out into the middle of the floor. He repeats the previously attempted theft of the watch and, sure enough, this sharper catches him at it. Hm. Very interesting. Now *how* did you catch me? Here, let's do it again—see if you can tell what it is that you notice that nobody else seemed able to notice—and then he repeats, again and again, the attempted theft of the watch, always unsuccessfully, but each time removing something else—tie, fountain pen, key ring, knife, wallet, handkerchief, passport or identification papers, and—as becomes apparent only when he has thanked his now happy collaborator for having exposed him, and started to lead him back to his table—the vigilant victim's belt or suspenders.

His infinitely preferred victim for this culminating point in his performance is, as might be expected in Vienna today, a Russian in uniform. For even now, over two years after the wild nightmare of the Red Army's orgy of "liberation," the sight of somebody taking a watch away from a Russian is the Viennese equivalent of seeing a man bite a dog. The problem is never that of getting the uniformed Russian to play stooge—they are surprisingly willing and remarkably good-natured about it—but simply the more elementary problem of finding a uniformed Russian in the average Viennese night-club audience. For while the Soviet Army is much less prone than our own to declare civilian night spots "off limit" for its soldiers, the comrades are as a rule simply not much given to night-clubbing. But every time Borra does get one of them out onto the floor and begins looting him with as much system and as little resistance as a corpse, you can sense, rather than see or hear, that in the eyes of the breathlessly watching Viennese this cool and calmly debonair young man is acquiring heroic stature of practically mythical proportion. What every last one of them has dreamed for over two years of doing to a Russian and here he is, getting paid for it, and making the Russian like it . . .

Of course Borra's turn in a night club doesn't stop with ordinary pocket-picking, nor even with his own extraordinary kind. Although in Viennese eyes anything he might do, after robbing a Russian and surviving—even were it to be something so astonishing as a standing high jump over the top of the ferris wheel in the Prater—would smack, understandably, of anticlimax. Still, he goes on to do

Continued on page 162

JAS E. PEPPER
BORN WITH THE REPUBLIC
6
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of somebody's
good taste!

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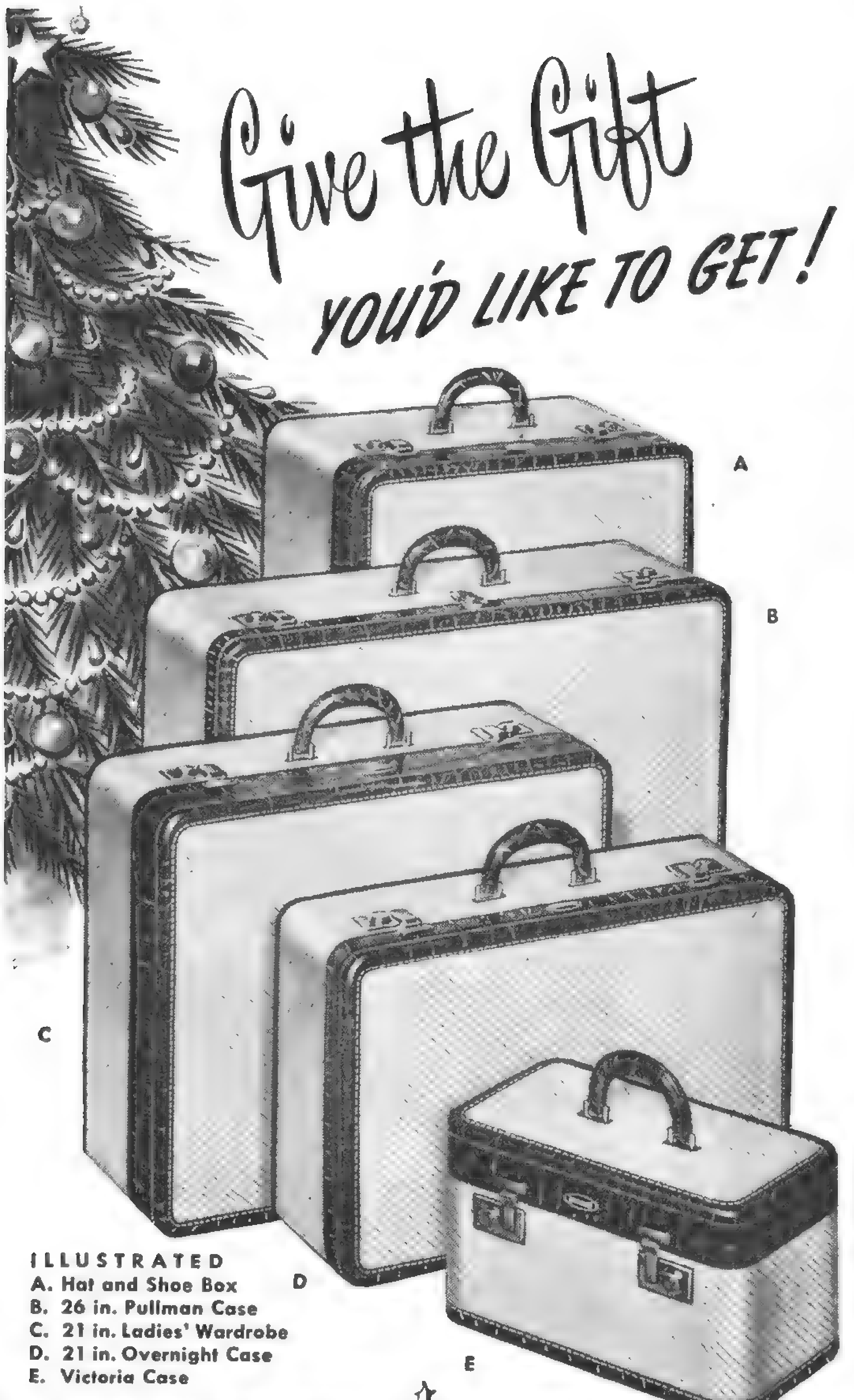
6 YEAR OLD
KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY
100 PROOF, BOTTLED IN BOND

JAMES E. PEPPER & COMPANY • LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY



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B. 26 in. Pullman Case
C. 21 in. Ladies' Wardrobe
D. 21 in. Overnight Case
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511 S. Sangamon St., Chicago 7, Ill. • 10 E. 34th St., New York 16, N. Y.
[illegible]

Silhouette of a Displaced Personality

Continued from page 161

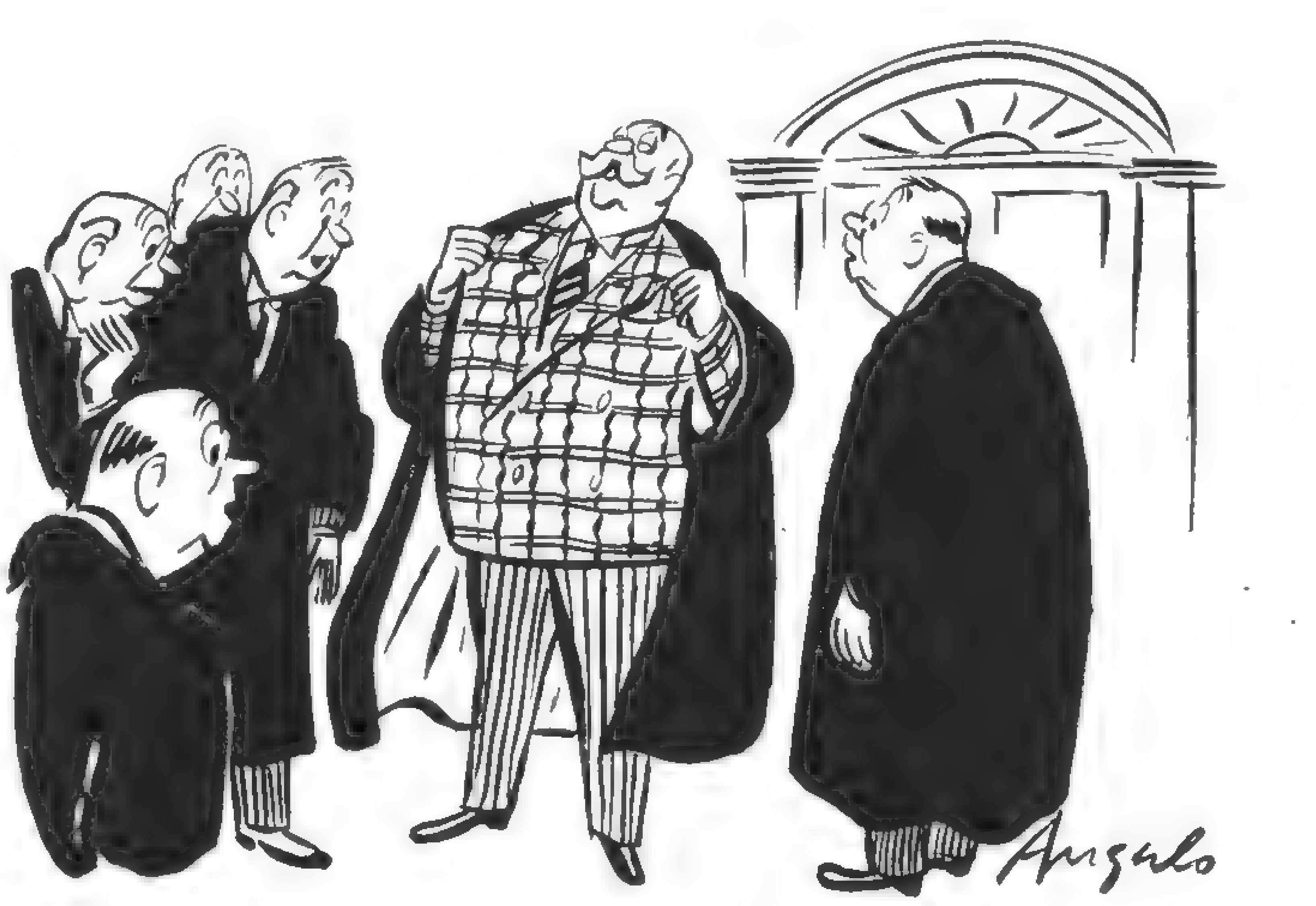
all sorts of illusions, some of which are remarkable enough that, to distort a phrase, they must be seen to be adequately disbelieved. The things he does with an ordinary cigarette, for example—yours or anybody's in the audience—are truly extraordinary, even apart from the fact that he does them on a drafty night-club floor. He blows smoke rings as round and fully formed as so many sugared doughnuts from the nearest Red Cross hut—and then when four or five of them are lazily afloat in the air from three to six feet away, he somehow makes them sail right back into his mouth.

On the other hand, some of his illusions are fairly standard practice among ranking American magicians, being within the repertory even of such gifted amateurs as Orson Welles. But just when you think his act is about to run into a rut is precisely when he will startle you with a most unexpected detour out of the trodden path. He will, for example, stretch his comely and shapely assistant out between two chairs, and you settle back for the old one about sawing a woman in half. But it suddenly turns out that nothing could be farther from Borra's thought. He is, instead, content to walk right through her! It can't be done, naturally, but you rub your eyes every time you see him do it.

Borra lives in an overcrowded, underserviced flat in a ramshackle and dilapidated area in this once beautiful Danube city that is now incredibly dingy and drab even after over two years of reconstruction efforts. The place where he lives, with his nineteen-year-old second wife, the younger sister of his first wife who died giving birth to his two-year-old son—the flat which houses not only the three of them but also his mother-in-law and a whole bevy of elderly female relatives—would be considered not only small, but of sub-slum rating, or rather condemnation, by American housing standards. His in-laws were the Klutskys, the owners of a long-lived circus in the old royal and imperial time when little Austria was the hub of the vast Austro-Hungarian Empire. Seeing them all huddled, for considerations of the dearth of light and heat, into one room, you need hardly be told that these people have seen better days, but so, for that matter, has practically everybody in Austria. Yet when you see Borra in a night club, immaculate in evening clothes of flawless cut, his entire air, manner and appearance redolent of palaces or, at the very least, luxury hotels, you would be ready to believe anything of him—even that he were Mephistopheles, for whom his darkly handsome elegance would make him perfectly if too youthfully cast—rather than admit the inadmissibly prosaic truth that he is a DP—just another of Europe's teeming thousands of stateless and homeless Displaced Persons. He is one of the thousands of Yugoslavs who cannot go home again for the sole and simple reason that they happen not to have shared their countrymen's present remarkably unanimous enthusiasm for Marshall Tito.

It would be preposterous to say that Borra, this most individually gifted personality, is a typical DP. But no more preposterous than to say—along with too many Americans in Europe today—that there is any such thing as a typical DP. Seeing them only quickly and casually in their wretched surroundings, in which almost all of them still live after two years beyond the cessation of the hostilities that were expected to settle their fate, it is easy—in fact it is hard not—to think of them as a pretty grubby lot of steerage characters. That is why it has in this instance been thought interesting to take a closer look at one of them—even an obviously unusual one. But in one respect even this unusual one is typical. For Borra, like virtually every DP encountered to date, dreams and is sustained by the dream of life—just any kind of life under any sort of circumstances—in America. ⧺

Continued from page 50



To Bill from Anne
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KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKY
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To Anne — from Bill

True for 77 Christmases...

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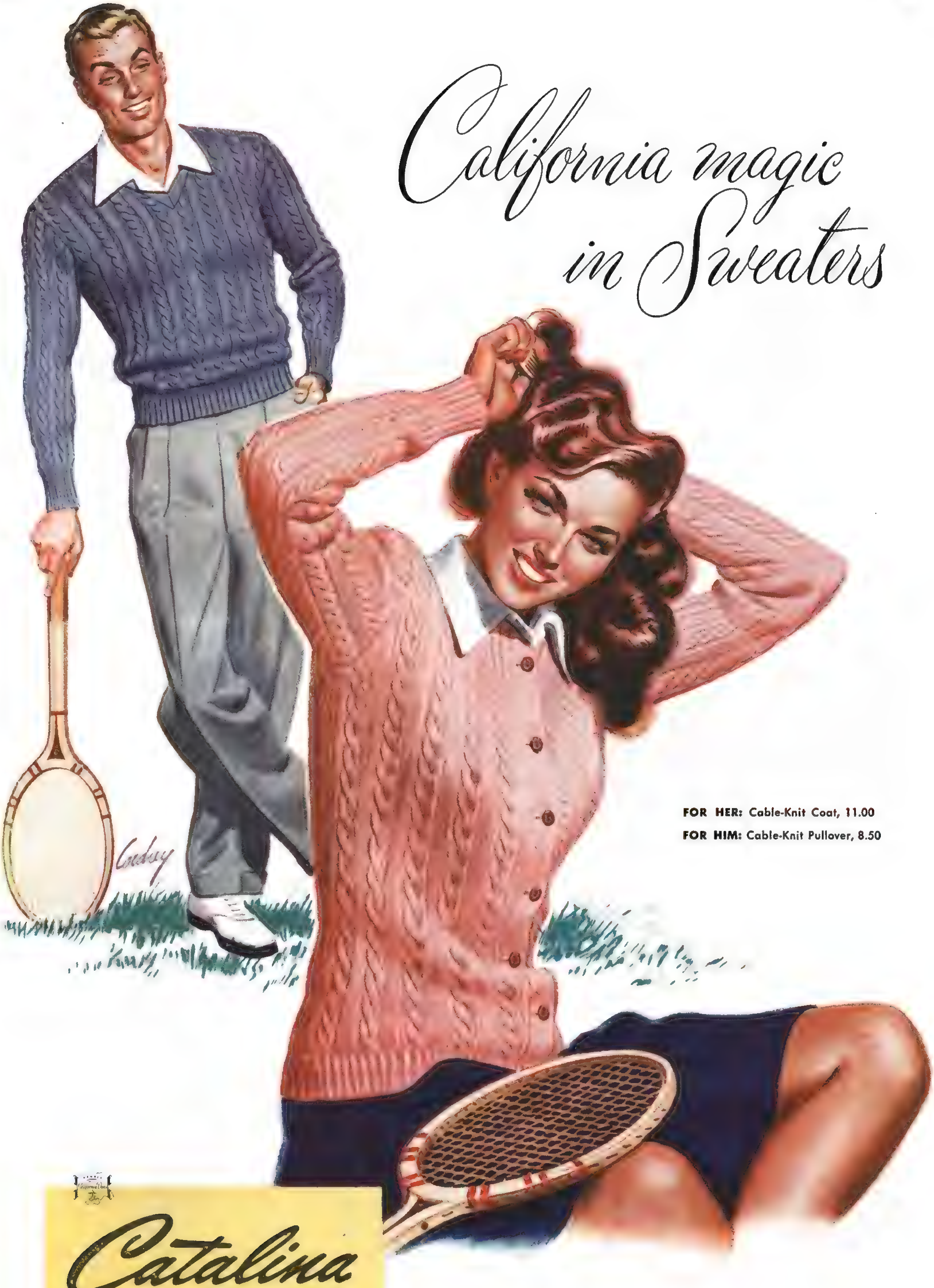
California magic in Sweaters



FOR HER: Cable-Knit Coat, 11.00

FOR HIM: Cable-Knit Pullover, 8.50

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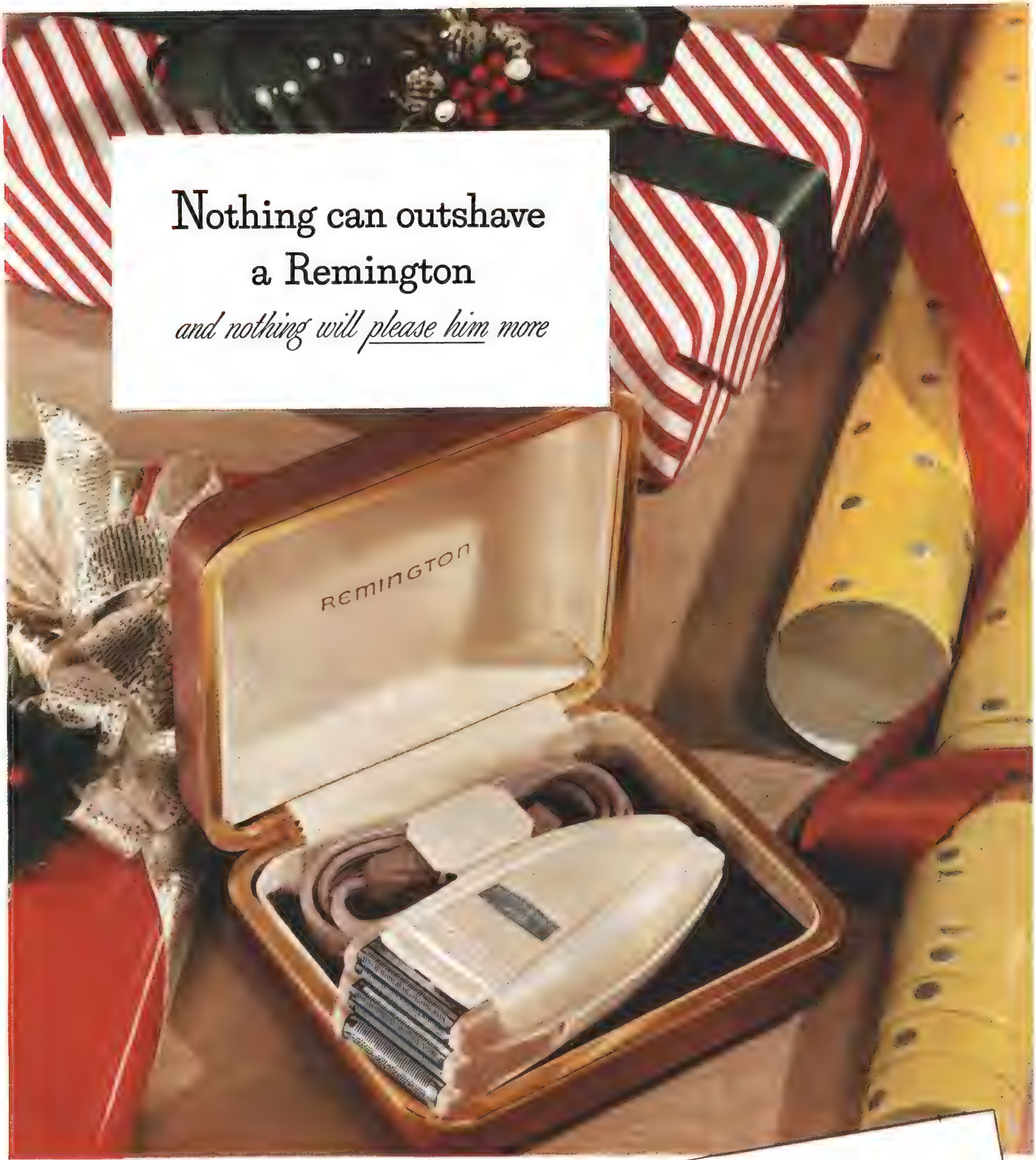
Nothing can outshave a Remington

and nothing will please him more



Men like practical gifts. A Remington electric shaver is just about the most useful year-round gift you could select.

Every man has to shave, and a Remington makes his shaving faster, easier, more comfortable, more convenient. Remember—nothing can outshave a Remington! The chief reasons for the Remington's outstanding performance are the speed of its powerful, durable AC-DC motor and the exclusive Blue Streak twin shaving head, which handles long and short hairs with equal ease.

Choose one of these three Remington models in a handsome presentation case and you are sure to please him: The Remington Five (illustrated), The Remington Foursome, The Remington Triple — or the newest, latest Remington, the 6V-110V auto-home shaver, which he can use both in his car and at home. Remington prices start at $17.50. Remington Rand Inc., Electric Shaver Division, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

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More Remingtons have been sold since 1940 than all other makes combined

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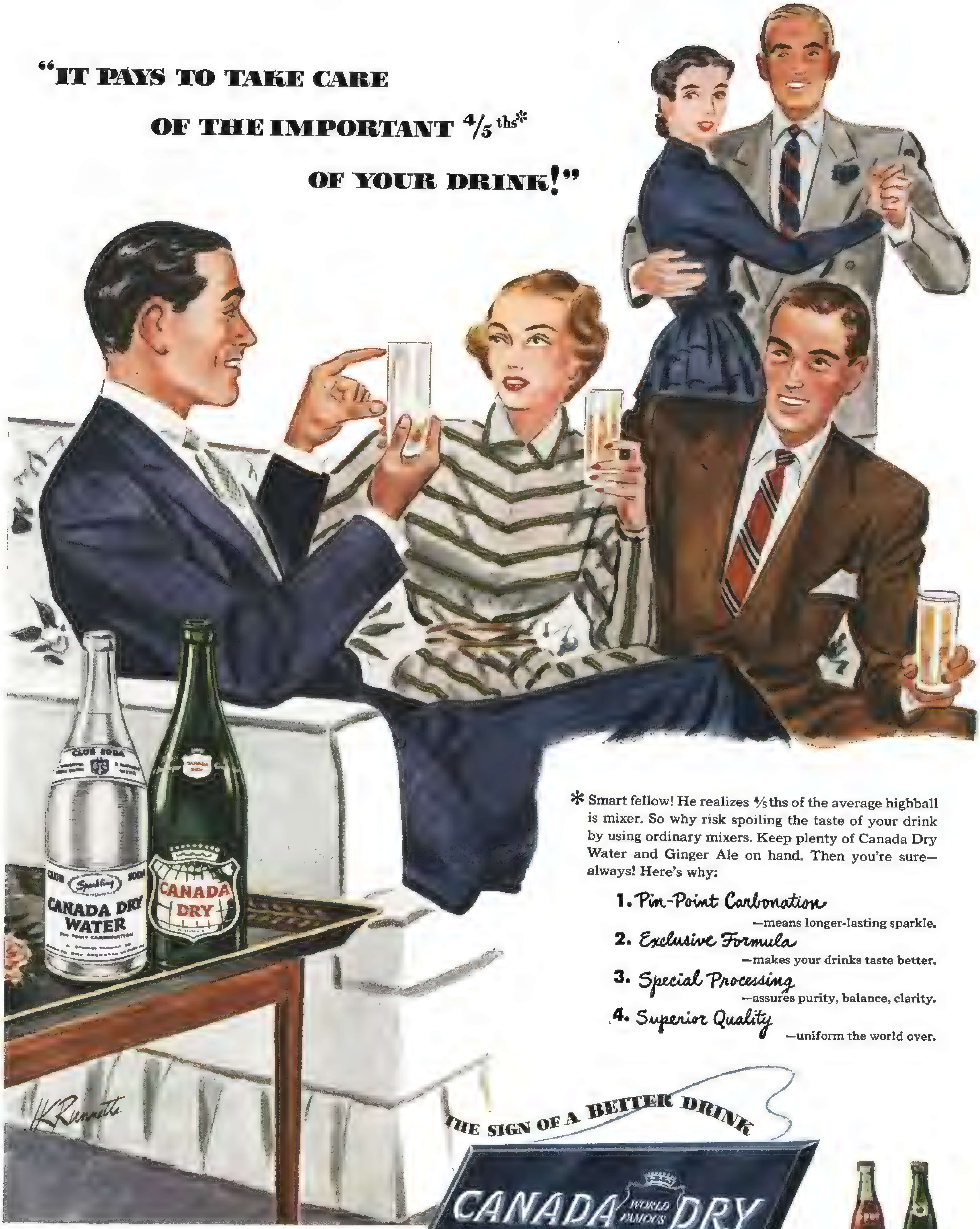
CLUB SODA
CLUB Sparkling SODA
CANADA DRY WATER
CANADA DRY
K Rennette

* Smart fellow! He realizes 4/5ths of the average highball is mixer. So why risk spoiling the taste of your drink by using ordinary mixers. Keep plenty of Canada Dry Water and Ginger Ale on hand. Then you're sure—always! Here's why:

1. *Pin-Point Carbonation* —means longer-lasting sparkle.
2. *Exclusive Formula* —makes your drinks taste better.
3. *Special Processing* —assures purity, balance, clarity.
4. *Superior Quality* —uniform the world over.

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CANADA WORLD FAMOUS DRY BEVERAGES

- There's nothing like Spur for finer rum and cola drinks.
- For a mixer that gives drinks fresh zip, ask for Hi-Spot.

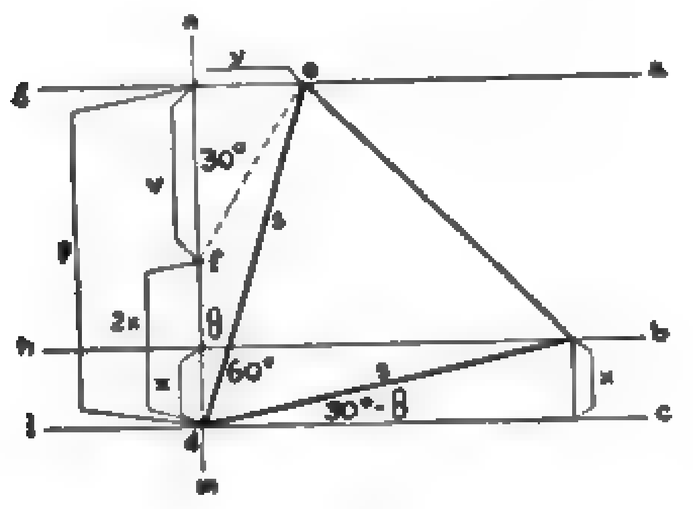
The Sound and the Fury

Continued from page 10

Q. E. D.

The evening I bought your magazine and saw Mr. Reil's triangle problem I sat up until two in the morning until I had it licked. My wife is of the opinion that a working man who sits up to that hour wracking his brains with such trivia probably does not possess any. So be a good fellow, Esky, and discourage these disturbers of domestic tranquillity.

CONSTRUCTING AN EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE WITH ITS APEXES TOUCHING THREE PARALLEL LINES.



Erect perpendicular n-m to parallel lines a-g, b-h and c-i. Measure 2x on n-m from point d. From point f thus established lay off a 30° angle from n-m cutting a-g at e. e-d will then form one side of the required triangle.

$$x = s \sin (30 - 0°)$$
$$x = \frac{s (\cos 0 - \sqrt{3} \sin 0)}{2}$$
$$x = \frac{s\left(\frac{p}{s} - \frac{\sqrt{3}y}{s}\right)}{2}$$
$$2x = p - \sqrt{3}y$$
$$y = \frac{p - 2x}{\sqrt{3}}$$
$$y = \frac{v}{\sqrt{3}}$$
$$\frac{v}{y} = \sqrt{3}$$
$$\frac{v}{y} = \text{cotan } 30°$$

VICTOR STRAHL
New York, N. Y.

superman what now

(1)

Report on Mr. White is excellent. However, Mr. White isn't the only one who is being taken in by "former" Nazis.

An innocent nonogenerian was elected mayor of Würzburg, Bavaria in June, 1946. His Christlich Partei was front for a Nazi group!

E. R. FURBUR
Leavenworth, Kan.

(2)

Mr. A. J. Liebling does very well with Mr. White. Shall we say of the "forgive and forget" school that they haven't been on the wrong end of the cane?

For one, I would like to see a fitting punishment meted out to the Nazis. Not that such would even the score—but only to commemorate the many "events." As it is now, the salt tears of the Whites have eroded all recollection.

HOWARD M. ROSENTHAL
Jersey City, N. J.

reproof

For God's sake, what has happened to Gallico!? Has anyone tipped him off to the fact that he is writing for Esquire and not *Vogue*, or the Campfire Girls magazine? All this coy whimsy about the latest fashions (feminine that is), the pleasant, but boring chit-chat about him and the missus, and their charming little English excursion, is a bit cloying for the Gallico we knew of old, and this last issue was just too cute for words. We had to wet the pages to get them apart, they were so sticky. The agony column—! Gad, how many writers have discovered the agony column before Mr. G. It's as overdone as *Life With Father.*

A Gallico Fan,
H. R. SHIELDS
New York, N. Y.

Editor's Note: Did somebody say, "I can take care of my enemies but Heaven protect me from my fans"?

of time and motion

In my September Esquire which I acquired yesterday I happened to notice the cartoon on page 168 showing the acrobatic waiter on skates, carrying dishes on head, hands and foot with the caption: "What we need are more men like Kennerly."

I was formerly a time and motion study man for Dan River Mills, but am no longer in that capacity. The object in time study was to see how much work an individual was doing in a certain length of time and then figure how much more you could give them to do in order to fill up any slack time during a regular work shift. You see now why I'm in for a little ribbing?

ROBERT KENNERLY
Danville, Va.

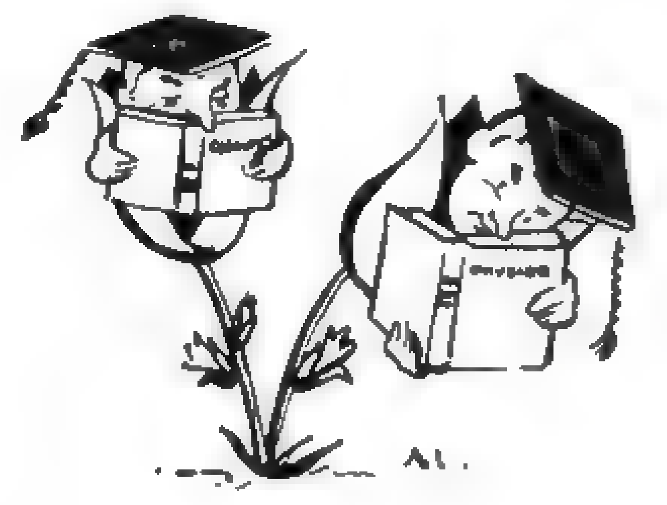
shadow and substance

I have just bought the October issue of Esquire and can hardly tear my eyes away from the gallery. They are indeed beautiful girls and long ago I gave up my search for same in real life as I know now there is no such beauty. I looked hard enough in Europe and although I came across several beautiful girls, they definitely weren't up to Esquire standard.

I arrived in Canada seven weeks ago fully expecting to see many beautiful females, knowing Canada and U.S.A. to be practically untouched by the miseries of war. But although I have crossed the river several times into Detroit, I haven't seen anyone yet whom I would call a beauty.

Maybe I am too impatient, but so far I reckon Europe has got Canada and U. S. licked.

BARRINGTON P. BROUGHAN
Windsor, Ontario
Canada



time and the river

We "budding geniuses" wish to take time out from poring over our calculus and physics books to compliment you on your campus portrait of M.I.T.

However, there is one discrepancy in the article. Since 1916, when Technology moved across the Charles, frustrated Tech students have not had to cross the river to get to Radcliffe.

ROBERT A. CESARI '50
DONALD WOODWARD '50
DAVID H. FRODEY '50
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

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MARLBORO
Plain Ends
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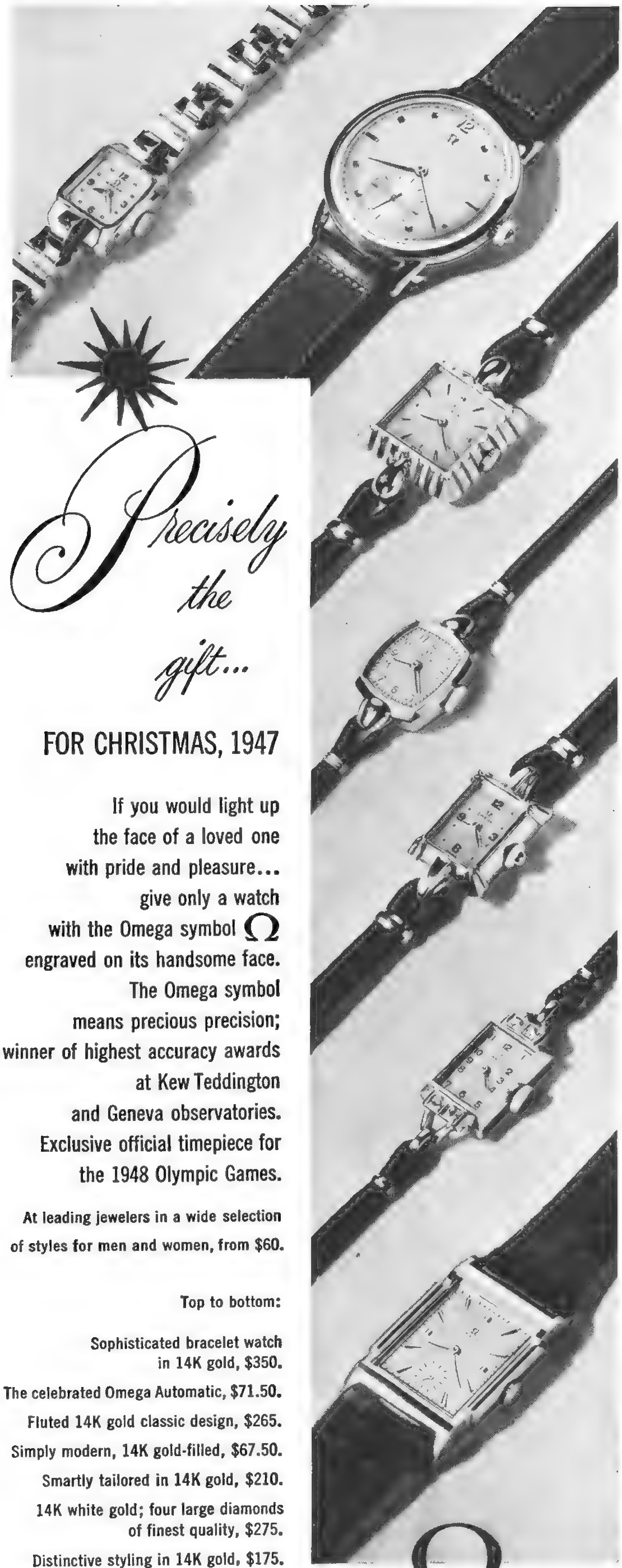
No greater compliment to your friends.. Superb tobaccos magnificently blended.
Only a few pennies more.



Precisely the gift...

FOR CHRISTMAS, 1947

If you would light up
the face of a loved one
with pride and pleasure...
give only a watch
with the Omega symbol Ω
engraved on its handsome face.
The Omega symbol
means precious precision;
winner of highest accuracy awards
at Kew Teddington
and Geneva observatories.
Exclusive official timepiece for
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At leading jewelers in a wide selection
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Top to bottom:

Sophisticated bracelet watch
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The celebrated Omega Automatic, $71.50.

Fluted 14K gold classic design, $265.

Simply modern, 14K gold-filled, $67.50.

Smartly tailored in 14K gold, $210.

14K white gold; four large diamonds
of finest quality, $275.

Distinctive styling in 14K gold, $175.

ALL PRICES INCLUDE FEDERAL TAX.

Ω

OMEGA

Ordeal by Fire

Continued from page 47

see my lawyer when I got back to town. Wife noted ugly expression on my face and made no further suggestions.

7:30 p.m. New fire laid. More crumpled paper, but switch from *Mirror* to *Daily News*. Sticks of kindling. Charcoal. Half a bottle of lighter fluid poured over everything. Match applied.

7:30½ p.m. "PLOOOOF!" Barbecue blown halfway across porch, fetching up against window shutter, unhinging it, but she's agoin'. Cheers from guests, but none from wife.

7:52 p.m. Barbecue belching forth huge clouds of oily black smoke, same being caught by wind and driven into house through kitchen door, permeating ground floor and upper stories and driving all inhabitants coughing and sneezing out into the night.

8:01 p.m. Eureka! The charcoal is burning. One lump has caught.

8:05 p.m. The fire has spread from the first lump to a second. It may yet come off. And does it reeka.

8:30 p.m. All charcoal burning furiously. Heat and smoke intense. Barbecue begins to emit dull red glow and black paint starts to blister and drop off. Inside kitchen, window curtains start to turn brown and shrivel. Wife rushes shrieking therefrom: "For heaven's sakes, get that thing off the porch and out onto the lawn before you set the house on fire." Would comply, but unable to approach barbecue at this point because of heat. Porch begins to char.

8:30 p.m. Fortunate shift in wind makes possible approach barbecue from the west. Seize it by handle. Burn hands first time. Gallantly see it through and wheel it off porch and onto lawn. Hit bump. Coals drop out, starting second grass fire, and one of them landing on instep begets considerable activity on the part of deponent.

8:40 p.m. Glowing charcoal now spread out over lower grill with fireplace poker sends shower of sparks into air and onto shingle roof. Guests quickly organized into volunteer fire watchers, manning garden hose to wet down roof.

8:55 p.m. Ready at last. Charcoal, in fact entire broiler, now glowing cherry red. Impossible to approach barbecue closer than three feet from any direction. Operator manages to shove dozen ears of corn into space beneath coals, losing eyebrows in process and setting fire to white cotton gloves.

9:00 p.m. Time out for first aid. Argument over respective merits of unguents for burns. Wife pleads tearfully with operator to abandon project, swearing that she loves him and does not wish to become young and attractive widow. Operator deaf to all appeals, grimly determined to see it through. His face is now a lobster red and he is sweating heavily.

9:05 p.m. The big moment. The steaks are prepared. They have been rubbed with garlic and anointed with olive oil. Everybody stands by. Here they go onto the broiler.

9:05¼ p.m. PLOOOOOOOOF! SWISH! CRACKLE! Entire barbecue enveloped in sheet of solid flame as oil and fat from steaks ignite. Vesuvius on a busy night is just a kid's sparkler compared to this eruption. Countryside lighted up for miles around. Impossible to approach closer than twenty feet to blazing broiler, which now resembles newsreels of Pittsburgh blast furnace. Neighbors telephone to inquire whether we wish services of local fire department. Leaves begin dropping from trees. Guests forcibly restrained from playing hose on barbecue and instead directed to extinguish three new grass fires and small blaze beginning to smolder under eaves of house.

9:13 p.m. Conflagration at its height. Night has been turned into day.

9:25 p.m. Blaze a trifle less severe. Four small black objects glimpsed between curtains of orange flame and black smoke atop broiler. Must be the steaks. With cry of anguish, operator rushes in to rescue them. Driven off by heat and smoke. Severely burned about hands and face, also slightly overcome by fumes.

9:40 p.m. Fire beginning to come under control. House saved, but all shrubs and plants within radius of fifty feet seared.

10:15 p.m. Fire out. Ruins sufficiently cooled down to permit approach of insurance adjusters, coroner, etc. No remains or trace of steaks; identification must await later sifting of ashes for dental plates, key rings, cuff buttons, etc. One ear of corn survived holocaust and, though charred black, can be recognized for what it once was. Damage: loss of four steaks, estimated at $50,000.

10:55 p.m. Guests and what remains of operator sit down to dinner prepared by wife, consisting of scrambled eggs, bacon and toast.

Names from an Old Address Book

"Chita Cristiani—Circle 6-0680. Also Columbus 5-9601, Care of Doc Bender . . ."

Where are you now, my dear, and your husband who could turn so many flipflops in one spot, and your magnificent family? Wherever you may be, bless you all, good luck and a Happy New Year.

The names and the times and the memories that live on, locked away in an old address book . . .

It was circa 1935 that I first met and fell in love with Chita Cristiani. She was a circus queen, the star of the famous and wonderful family of riding Cristianis, and I was a nobody. She performed on the back of a milk-white horse. She had jet-black hair and two of the largest and most beautifully luminous black eyes ever set in a human face. She was as light and airy as thistledown and when she poised on her toes on the rump of the big, lumbering circus horse all in white, she was like a silver-and-black hovering dragonfly. Everybody who saw her fell in love with her. She probably was never aware of how many dreams she visited.

But I was more fortunate than many, for I met her, and touched her hand and looked into her eyes. It was backstage at the Circus in Madison Square Garden where I was conducting some experiments with a Leica camera, and when she came out of the arena, delicately flushed from the exertions of her ride, she posed for me, and I met them all, Papa and Mama and all the brothers and sisters. And having looked into Chita's eyes one would never be the same again or, for that matter, ever wish to be.

We were married in 1942, though she was not aware of it. You see, a writer has many advantages. He can create the images of his most secret wishes. In that year, I wrote a story called *The Romance of Henry Menafee*, which Herb Mayes published for me in his *Good Housekeeping* Magazine, and which was later bought for pictures by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. It was the story of an English schoolmaster who ran away from his life, became a famous clown and wed the dark-haired, dark-eyed equestrienne queen. The schoolmaster was myself and the tender little circus rider he wooed and won after many tribulations was Chita Cristiani. What a happy ending to a long romance. Around and around the circus rings of Europe and North and South America rode Chita Cristiani on her white horse and never knew I had borrowed her for my dream.

Fate will play strange tricks, however. In 1943 Chita Cristiani and her family entered my address book. Fate this time was an odd character, a rotund Broadway theatrical agent by the name of Milton (Doc) Bender. He was agent for the Cristiani family and Vivienne Segal. And he had an idea. He wanted to produce a musical comedy with all of them in it. And he came to Pauline and to me to write it for him.

We almost got it on, too. The late Larry Hart wrote the lyrics and Emmerich Kalman the music. It was called *Miss Underground*, and the entire Cristiani family was to be starred in it with Vivienne Segal, with Chita riding her white horse. Vinton Freedley was going to produce it, until he became frightened by a feed bill. You see, those horses had to eat. When the production was delayed they threatened to eat him right into the poorhouse. And so it was called off. It was bad luck for the Cristianis, who had stayed out of the circus for a year in order to play in the show should we get it on.

But what happy and exciting times those were. Chita was happily married in the circus tradition to a stocky, powerful rider, and for me a new dream of a Princess, called Heidi out of one of my stories but whose real name was Pauline, had, like the statue of Galatea, become a living reality. For nearly a year we were all together, the circus and the showfolk and the writers, working, planning, rehearsing, suffering and delighting in the ups and downs of the game, as the show was now on, now off, bouncing from producer to producer, until it finally vanished from the scene, the most successful musical comedy unproduced on Broadway. And the riding Cristianis and Chita packed up their horses and spangles and paper hoops and rejoined the circus and that was the last we saw of them.

But Fate had one more trick

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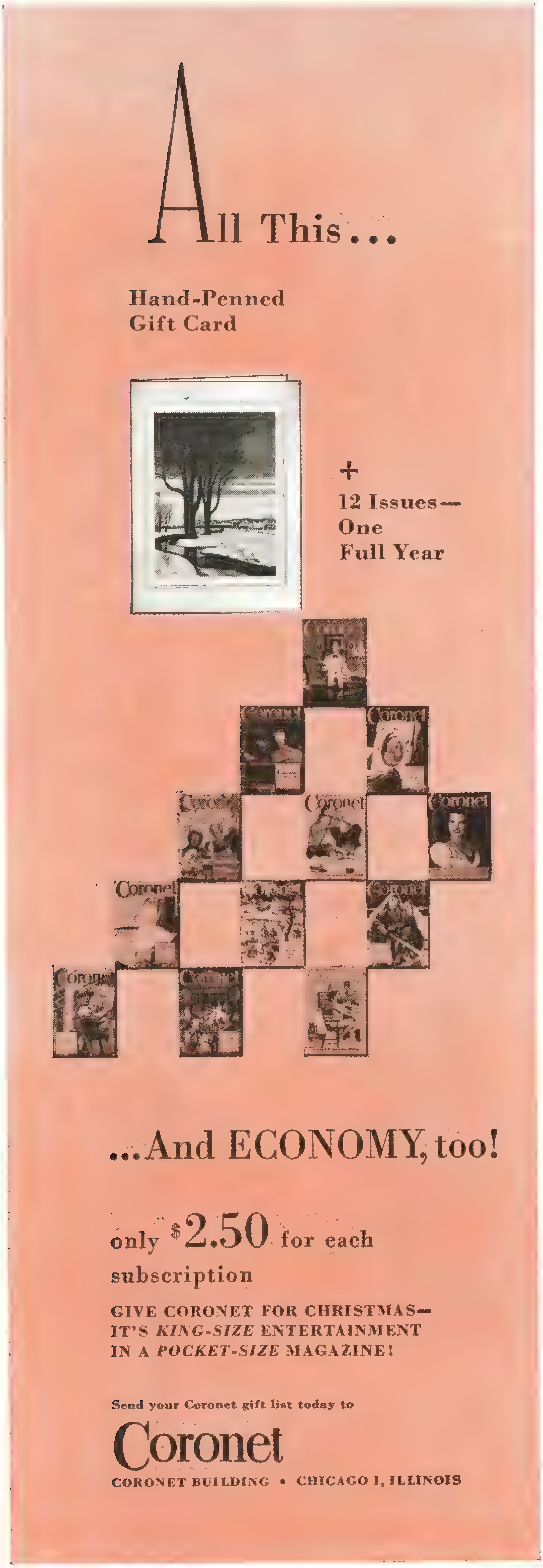

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Ordeal by Fire

Continued from page 169

to perform. I guess I was just bad luck for Chita. The last time we heard from her she was on the Coast. She had been offered a contract by M-G-M to do the riding in my circus picture, *The Romance of Henry Menafee*, in which Spencer Tracy was to play the lead. Don't you think that was a rather neat scheme of The Three With the Spindles? She remained on the Coast many months, waiting. And then in the last moment Spencer Tracy changed his mind and came east and took on the lead in Bob Sherwood's war play, and the picture was never made. That's show business. Well, I *almost* succeeded in writing her onto the stage and the screen.

And a Happy New Year to you too, Milton Bender, who brought us all together . . .

We Lead the World

I grant you that the essay that follows immediately is perhaps not exactly the most cosmic item with which to inaugurate the New Year, but riffling through my file of clippings of interesting news stories I have not yet got around to, I notice a number connected with the hardships and trials suffered by a unique type of performer, the Something Dancer. And I must declare that ours indeed is a most fortunate and much-blessed country in that we have so many talented ladies whose specialty is moving about in the altogether, in time to the strains of music, while concealing the essential or actionable portions of their anatomy behind a most astonishing variety of articles.

No other nation in the world, with the possible exception of la belle France, can boast such a number of ladies making with educational and cultural performances, and just to sit quietly at home and reflect that these talented and wonderful beings are in our midst, I maintain, is a stimulus and a comfort.

In my files as having made the public prints I find the name of Miss Sally Rand whose specialty, as you all know, is waving a large pair of ostrich fans fore and aft of her person, and another named Faith Bacon who employs the same device, a Miss Noel Toy, and again La Rand, who oscillates to and fro on a stage or night-club floor concealed behind a gigantic and unfortunately quite opaque balloon; there is the justly famous Dove Dancer, Miss Rosita Royce, whose sole barrier between her pelt and the audience, not to mention possible police action, consists of a number of doves trained to hover aggravatingly about her person and interfere with man's enjoyment of nature; there is a Miss Sally Keith who employs a tassel, and another charmer by the name of Tirza who disports herself in a wine-colored shower, and a lassie whose name escapes me at the moment, who is assisted by a parrot, and another who hides behind a mastiff.

So there you are; we have not one, but more than a half-dozen of these *grande artistes* in our midst, and if this doesn't give you a thrill of pride, or provide you with solace on a dull day just to reflect that we are a big enough country to support them all, it should. Probably there are many more that we do not even know about. The fertile minds that thought up fans, balloons, tassels, doves and parrots probably have not stopped there. For all we know, in some corner of our wonderful land, some twist is gyrating behind umbrellas, rubber plants, Japanese lanterns or catchers' mitts. One thing is certain—we lead the world.

In absentia, at least for me, this realization exercises the same kind of fascination as the six-day bicycle race. During the course of the grind, in the old days, one could wake up in the middle of the night, taut and sleepless in bed, and think upon the fact that at that very moment in Madison Square Garden fellows on bicycles were pursuing one another endlessly around the saucer. This thought, somehow, was so relaxing that instanter, almost, one found oneself snoring happily once more.

It is the same with our fabulous supply of Something Dancers. Sometime, somewhere, at whatever time of night or morning, one, or two, or three, or all of them are hazarding their reputations, not to mention the possibility of a sojourn in the local calaboose on the fragility of feather fans, the evanescence of a hydrogen-inflated sphere, or the memory of a pigeon. This is a very restful thought. I will wager there dwells no man the length and breadth of the land who could (or would) testify in court that he had viewed any illegal portion of the Misses Rand, Bacon, Royce or Thingumbob during a public rendition of one of their Something Dances, but there is always the possibility that some evening someone will. It is just one of those happy realizations that help to keep one going during tough times.

I have not yet had the pleasure of witnessing one of these exhibitions, though in good time I hope to do so and report my impressions of this great art form to you, but in the meantime I am just trying to say that the mere presence of these nimble and agile ladies on the same continent helps to keep me contented and happy. From time to time, when they become embroiled with the law or love, the newspapers will print their pictures complete with the weird and fascinating properties they employ, and my day will be made brighter thereby.

Gallant, talented, warm-blooded little creatures, ceaselessly dancing behind something or other—it *is* pretty wonderful, don't you think? ⧻

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woman I know. But that isn't the whole reason. Attractiveness in itself doesn't drive men crazy. Norma, if you had responded to me tonight, if we had slipped off somewhere and got married, and you were here beside me now . . .

"I have just stopped. The room is cold and draughty, and a storm is raging outside. I'm writing this in bed, and I looked at the empty place beside me, and wept. Yet my suffering doesn't mean a thing except that I can't take it . . .

"Twelve years ago, when you were a student and I was an instructor, we had a romance—your first and my first—and I wasn't man enough to hold you. It was a nice little campus hand-holding-and-discreet-kissing love, which really is less than nothing. But when you dropped me and married Bill, it turned into a great grief.

"I might have had you and I let you slip out of my hands. You were a blurred memory, an emotion, a pain, a loss—my failure.

"And so, when I heard you had divorced Bill in New York, I didn't do what a true lover would do. I didn't go to New York and take you and give myself in return. I wrote you my usual wistful, ardent letter; I just hoped, kind of. Because—well, I was all settled comfortably with my Doctor's degree and my three thousand a year, and if you had come flying to Winona and said you'd be mine, I think I'd have been dismayed. But when you married this Mitchell, I loathed myself for not having fought for you . . .

"So, this Christmas, when you came back to Winona, divorced a second time, I wanted you desperately, and it was a heavenly moment when I realized you were hurt and disillusioned—that you were hungry for the thing we had had together when we were young. It came so suddenly that day on the Christmas-deserted campus. You were mine! And then, to my secret self, I began wondering how marriage would disarrange my life—would it last, would you be too much for me, too expensive, too restless. I found myself wondering why you had been divorced twice, losing respect for you . . .

"Well, you sensed what was going on in me—and, when you broke it off then and there, I couldn't tell you your intuition was true. I had a bad time, of course. It's the weak who go through hell, not the strong. It's the shallow who suffer, not the deep. It's the vain, the conceited, the insincere who endure the greatest agony.

"I don't know how the next few weeks passed. You had said that you didn't believe in love, that you were going to marry for security and prestige—trade your affections and play fair.

"I didn't grasp that—I hardly remembered it except as so many words. Then I heard you were going with Dave Sundstrom . . ."

Professor Gurn shivered, climbed out of bed, went into the living room, got the bottle of bourbon, took a long drink, carried it to the bedside table and slipped under the covers again. He picked up the letter, read what he had written and in sudden revulsion tossed it to the floor.

Then he started another letter.

"Dr. J. B. Stoefelder, c/o The Noonday Press, New York City

"Dear Sir:

"I hope you remember me and the very pleasant evening we spent together last spring when you visited the University. I write you now in the strictest confidence—as a prospective patient who admires your great work in the field of psychiatry. I am not in a position to come to you for psychoanalysis, nor can I afford the money. But may I tell you something that has happened, and—for a fee, naturally—will you answer a few general questions?

"I am 37, a bachelor, but I consider myself sexually normal. I am, you may recall, a professor of Economics. Recently a woman, whom I had loved (innocently) and lost years ago, returned to this town, and, disillusioned after two marriages, was in a mood to renew our old romance. However, at the start of our happiness, shortly after our first kiss to be exact, she became uncannily aware of my innermost thoughts—fears about the burdens of marriage, the disturbance of bachelor habits and freedoms—and she harshly rejected me.

"I received this with mixed emotion, much of it secret relief. But as the weeks went by, the uneventfulness of my own life, coupled with the discovery that she was being seen everywhere with a wealthy, uneducated, self-made industrialist, brought me an intolerable chagrin and an overpowering desire for her at all costs.

"I tried to see her continually, and was steadily repulsed.

"Tonight I happened to meet the industrialist, who is a cordial acquaintance of mine, and he mentioned he would be at his factory all evening. This was about 8:30. I went to her house.

"Her mother answered the door, told me the daughter was out, refused to say where. I insisted on looking through every room. The mother did not seem frightened, but rather was distressed for me, as we are old friends. Before I would leave, I insisted that she tell me where the daughter, whom I will call X, was. The mother said she didn't know. I apologized for my behavior, and left.

"I drove aimlessly. It was Friday evening, dance night at the sororities and fraternities. Music flowed into the streets, and everywhere through windows I could see dancing couples. The music and the unceasing amorous impact of embracing young people sharpened my despair.

"As I passed the Theta house, I suddenly remembered she had been a Theta, and it occurred to

Continued on page 172

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Design in Confetti

Continued from page 171

me she might be one of the chaperons at the dance. I went in, and there she was in evening dress, with a group of young people at the punch bowl. To avoid a scene, she put on her wrap and agreed to walk around the block with me.

"I challenged her to look me in the eye and tell me she loved Z. I called her a cold, calculating, heartless and besmirched woman. I called her a wonderful, tender, confused and wounded creature who was behaving blindly and would regret it with shame. I said if she would marry me I would resign my University position, regardless of contract, go to New York and become economics adviser to an advertising agency (I had once received a tempting offer of such a job).

"I pointed out that Z has been living his adult life with his mother and sister. He is forty, and they would not give him up lightly; that any woman he married would lead a harassed existence. I told her very ardently how much I loved her.

"She was quiet and patient, which drove me wild. She said my very violence and extravagance made her question even more the genuineness of my love. She said she liked Z very much and she believed devoutly in liking and had no faith in loving.

"We were around the corner now, where I had parked my car. There was a flickering of snow and she wanted to return to the sorority house. I proposed that, to save her wrap, I would drive her back. We got into the car, and I knew I would drive her forever before I should let her get away. I told her so as we headed away from the Theta house.

"Out in the country I stopped the car and burst into tears. This is not characteristic of me; I don't recall weeping since childhood. Instead of being touched by my plight, I felt she was disgusted, though she did not show it openly.

"I slapped her face. This shocked and frightened her. If a few cars had not passed, I might have strangled her; but car lights brought me partially to my senses.

"I apologized. I started the car, and drove toward Winona.

"As we approached the stadium I recalled an evening years ago when she and I had explored it one spring night. We had found the door open to the locker room, and made an adventure of going in. Sitting on a canvas cot we had looked romantically through windows at the moonlit practice field.

"I stopped the car. I said, 'If the door is unlocked, will you come in with me for one minute?'

"She must have realized that I meant to force her if refused, for she obediently said, 'All right.' The locker room door was open.

"I pushed a cot over by the window, took off my overcoat, and we sat down and watched the snow disappearing into the dark turf of the practice field. I don't know what I thought—probably that somehow I could make her recapture what we once had—if we just sat there long enough . . .

"But her face against the light of snow looked so proud and distant that I suddenly took hold of her and started kissing her.

"She resisted me, and in the struggle her wrap fell off. I went blind at the sight and feel of her bare shoulders. I pushed down one of her shoulder straps. She fought me. I picked her up, put her on the cot—and I pulled off her shoes.

"And then, when she persisted in shutting her lips and her teeth against my kisses, I lost all desire and only rage was left in me, rage at losing. I would rather have killed her than lose. I slapped her again, and she screamed. The sound startled me. She shoved me in the chin with her knee and scrambled off the cot. I beat her to the door and stood there.

"Then I said, inanely, 'Will you marry me?' I think the memory of that is the most horrifying of all. She said 'No,' without hatred. I knew then there was no chance and determined to kill her.

"She suddenly turned and headed blindly for the practice field.

"I didn't think she would go out into the snow in her stocking feet, but she did. I raced after her, and when I caught up with her I got on my knees before her in the turf. I kissed her feet and begged her to have mercy on me and told her I would destroy myself unless she said a kind word.

"Without answering, she walked back toward the stadium. I stayed there on my knees, looking in my pockets for a knife or something with which I could kill myself. When I got back to the locker room, it was empty. I put on my overcoat and went out to the car. I couldn't see her anywhere. I sat in the car a while, and then I drove home.

"I'm sure this brief account will give you the basis for many questions, which I will be glad to answer.

"What I am driving at is mainly this: I have always thought of myself as a man of intellect and dignity. Does my character possess a serious defect? A weakness? Or might this have happened to any man? How can I ease the intolerable pain? Should I remain in academic work? Should I ever marry? Is there an unconscious streak of homosexual in me? Am I likely to murder or to kill myself? Is there some procedure I can follow to bring me back to normalcy?"

He signed the letter, put it into an envelope and placed it on the table. Suddenly aware that he was perspiring, he pushed the bedclothes down and stretched out, breathing gratefully the icy, stale air. Soon, beginning to feel the chill again, he covered up. The yellow pad against his knees, he re-read the blank verse. With a burst of fluency he added more:

People in love are superior
people.
And people in love need kindness.
One who is being crucified needs
kindness, because he is alive.
And one who is not being crucified
is dead, and he should be
ashamed of his deadness and
do all he can for the exquisitely
suffering, magnificently help-
less living lovers.
Oh, people who are not in love,
it won't do to pretend you are
alive.
You can't pretend you are God.
You will only look silly.
You will sleep nights.
God doesn't sleep nights.
He writhes in His agony; He is
a lover: He is alive.

He paused and drank again from the bottle. He drew stationery from the box and wrote:

"Dear Dave:

"We have known each other a long time, and I hope you will take this letter in the spirit of my genuine friendship for you.

"I don't know how far things have gone between you and Norma Mitchell, but I have reason to believe she wants to marry you, and in that case you'll naturally be more than willing. I have known Norma for quite a while, and I want you never to let any doubts cross your mind as to her essential goodness and unswerving devotion to what she believes is right. She is a victim, not of any flaw in her own character, which is warm and tender, but of this cursed modern civilization, which puts all spirited women behind the eight-ball.

"Dave, she will make any man a lovely wife. She . . ."

With sudden disgust he threw the letter away, grabbed another sheet and wrote vindictively:

"Dear Dave:

"If you're taking Norma Mitchell seriously, you're in for trouble. I write this as your friend and well-wisher. She is a bitch on wheels. She has never thought of anyone but herself, and never will . . ."

He crushed that one into a ball and started a new letter.

"Dr. Joshua J. Paltring, President, Winona University, Winona, Illinois

"Dear Dr. Paltring:

"Due to the strain I was under when in the Armed Forces, I find I am unable to fulfill my duties in the Economics Department. I'm sure you realize that I would not make so serious a statement without careful consideration . . ."

He took a shot from the bottle, and started still another.

"Dear Henrietta:

"Though you have been your usual kind and patient self, it certainly must have been obvious to you that I have been acting strangely for the last month. The matter is personal, and unfortunately I am unable to explain, but I hope that your sensible, cheerful disposition will keep you from worrying about it and me.

"I am leaving the University and may not have time to say good-bye. Frankly, I don't think I have ever been good enough for you, and in the long run you'll be thankful it all happened this way.

"I could righteously say that I never actually talked marriage to you, but that would be a caddish evasion. I should have. You are lucky that I didn't, however.

"This is a very inadequate letter, Henrietta. Try to read between the lines—I am under a great strain and must do much in a short time. I am going East and will write you in a month or two. I hope by then any vexation I may have caused you will have vanished.

"I hope someday to meet you and your then husband and children—you should have many and undoubtedly will—and that you will be glad and I will be glad for you.

"Most affectionately yours,
"Henry"

This letter he sealed and addressed.

He turned on the radio at the other side of the bed. It was almost four, and a night club in Hollywood, where it was almost two, filled the room with *My Heart Belongs To Daddy.*

There were long commercials after a while, then the band said good night, and a record program began. He wondered why he had not thought of the radio before; the radio was a counterirritant, a brash incessant companion, but a companion. He was no longer alone. His friends were telling him about loans on automobiles, cures for stomach ills and dandruff, and they played and sang with incomparable gusto while his mind, mercifully blank, hung suspended between them and the white-spitting demons outside.

By six the storm was spent and voiceless, yielding the field to the music from Hollywood. A romantic baritone on a record was singing *It Might As Well Be Spring.*

I'm as restless as a willow in a
windstorm;
I'm as jumpy as a puppet on a
string.

I'd say that I had Spring fever—
But I know it isn't Spring . . .

He listened intently, and suddenly, when the song reached

I keep wishing I were somewhere
else,
Walking down a strange new
street,

Copyright MCMXLV by Williamson Music, Inc., New York

a wave of fury lifted him out of the bed. He tore the radio from the wall and set it blindly on the floor, stumbled to the desk in the living room, opened his typewriter and inserted some paper.

"Dear Mrs. Sundstrom:

"Don't try to find out who wrote this letter—just investigate the facts, and do something about your son Dave who as you must know is a damn fool—and has got into the hands of the most unprincipled wench he or you ever met. This adventuress is out to strip your lunkhead of a son of

Continued on page 174

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When Bill Delaney's car breaks down,
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But when Bill's friends stop in for drinks,
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He does this *tricky job* himself,
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You'll discover that Heublein's Cocktails are made from the finest ingredients money can buy—and they're so easy to serve! Just use lots of ice, strain and serve! (All Heublein Cocktails are made extra strong to allow for 20% dilution by the melting ice.)

NOW...EIGHT KINDS!

Daiquiri, *60 proof* • Dry Martini, *71 proof*
Stinger, *65 proof* • Whiskey Sour, *60 proof*
Side Car, *60 proof* • Manhattan, *65 proof*
Gibson (very, very dry Martini), *79 proof*
Old Fashioned, *70 proof*

G.F. HEUBLEIN & BRO., Inc., HARTFORD, CONN.

HEUBLEIN'S *Club* COCKTAILS

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Design in Confetti

Continued from page 173

his last nickel unless you get on the job with that iron fist of yours which Dave fears plenty—otherwise he wouldn't have kept his meetings with this woman secret from you. This woman can manipulate her sluttish affections at will. For a while she took a fancy to a certain professor, but when she found he didn't have enough money for her greedy appetites she dropped him and—though she considers your son a hick—chose him because of his bank account for her next victim. Her name is Norma Mitchell. Go to it, and good luck to you.

"A Friend"

[illegible] carefully folded the letter, put it into an envelope which he sealed, addressed and stamped.

It had stopped snowing. The first hammer blows of steam began smiting the radiator in front of him. He went slowly into the bedroom, picked up the bottle of bourbon and sat on the edge of the bed for a long time, bottle in hand. He put the bottle aside and stretched out on the bed.

A moment later he was sitting up, re-reading the unfinished poem. Tears trickled down his face. He found himself, with the unmistakable light of the dawn outside, suddenly released and articulate. Words were coming to him. Writing with feverish haste, he finished the poem. He read it.

People out of love are inferior
people.
People out of love should humbly
sell shirts, run trains, paint
pictures, shovel coal and keep
house.
But, whenever they get a chance,
they should drop everything
and get down on their knees to
people who are in love.
People in love are superior people.
And people in love need kindness.
One who is being crucified needs
kindness, because he is alive.
And one who is not being cruci-
fied is dead, and he should be
ashamed of his deadness and
do all he can for the exquisitely
suffering, magnificently help-
less living lovers.
Oh, people who are not in love,
it won't do to pretend you are
alive.
You can't pretend you are God.
You will only look silly.
You will sleep nights.
God doesn't sleep nights.
He writhes in His agony; He is
a lover; He is alive.
And oh, people who are not in
love, if someone should fall in
love with you—
If such a noble creature should
gracefully, bleedingly blind in
his pain, pause on your door-
step and reach his arms out
to you—
Then bend down, and let the tears
of gratitude flow from your
eyes, and give yourself to the
lover.
You have nothing better to do.
You have nothing one-millionth
as good to do.
Someone else can sell your shirts
or run your train.
Someone else can dance your
dance.
Someone else can substitute for
you in your false romance.
Yes, yes, yes, it can be.
The world will go on for all the
others.
It always does.
While you—you, the unworthy
and the blessed and the in-
finitely desirable—
You, the nothing and the less
than nothing—
You can enter into the heartbeat
and the agony of a lover,
And, before he becomes dead,
You can hold him in your arms.
(On your deathbed it will be some-
thing to remember.)

As he read, his face became bitter and arrogant, and by the time he was through he felt strangely relaxed, patro[illegible] lofty. He found a sheet of stationery and wrote:

"Norma:

"I enclose a poem which states exactly how I feel about last night. I am neither ashamed nor apologetic. I am disgusted with you, not myself. At the same time, I want to thank you. You have made me see the ugliness of this town, and you have unwittingly inspired me to go elsewhere. I send you the poem with contempt. When I finish this letter I shall start packing, and when you receive it, your puny little soul can have the shabby comfort of knowing you and I will never meet again.

"H. G."

He sighed, turned off the lamp and lay down. His eyes closed peacefully. And then, without warning, like a riveting machine drilling into his ears, the alarm clock went off. He reached for it viciously, stopped it and got up.

From the fraternity house down the block came the clanging of the seven o'clock dormitory bell.

He was back in a familiar world, a routine he knew to the last split second. If he started now—seven minutes to bathe, three minutes to brush his teeth, five minutes to shave, five minutes to dress. Then, in ten minutes, he would be at the Kampus Kwik Lunch. Another ten minutes for orange juice and coffee, and five more to reach the lecture hall in the Economics Building, where he would still have five minutes for a hasty glance through his notes.

Automatically he started undressing. When he came out of the bathroom, shaven, he checked his wrist watch with the clock, noted he was three minutes behind schedule. By the time he was in his overcoat and hat, brief case in hand, he was only a minute behind.

Hating disorder as well as unpunctuality, he looked fretfully at the mess in the bedroom. He began gathering the paper. He stacked the sheets roughly, opened envelopes, unfolded those letters and placed them on top of the others. Then he tore it all to bits which he dropped into the waste basket. He put the radio in place.

He got to his eight o'clock class with two minutes to spare. ⧺

Continued from page 62

Two Big Ifs

Continued from page 58

of one man killed, and then having to pull out because there was no fuel for a continued advance. They had found in front of them only old, untrained and recently mobilized civilians and boys whose voices hadn't begun to change. At Mons in Belgium the First had annihilated a couple of the fleeing divisions that had been intended to hold the Siegfried sector in front of them. When the advance was resumed my friends faced tough cookies again—the re-equipped, reorganized survivors of the first-string German units whom they had defeated in France. (There might not have been any survivors if Third Army had been allowed to close the Argentan-Falaise gap still earlier in the campaign, when Montgomery refused to let American troops come into his zone of advance—where he wasn't advancing. That is another episode Allen discusses with even more heat than Ingersoll, whose treatment of it was torrid. Me, I remember hearing at a corps headquarters near Vire early in August, 1944, that elements of the American Fifth Armored had penetrated into Falaise and been ordered out so that the British could take it in their own good time. Several days later I was at Argentan myself and the chastened Americans weren't even trying to close the gap.)

Patton, as Allen recounts, got a task force into Metz in September, but had to pull it out and remain high and dry until November. That too is a story that I heard from many of the Charlies who had been there, in 1944.

Allen's account of the Autumn, 1944, episode fills two chapters of his vividly pugnacious book. One is called Hot Oil, the other Metz, Mud and Murder. They are illustrated with maps conciliatingly entitled "Area of Montgomery's Abortive Offensive," and "Third Army's Zone of Advance and Positions at Time of the Sit-down Imposed by SHAEF." But the story has acquired new significance since Ingersoll told it. The thing that impressed me most, reading Ingersoll, was that if Twelfth Army Group had been given the go-ahead it might have ended the war and saved thousands of combatant lives destined to be lost in the Battle of the Bulge and later. It might also have saved millions of concentration camp inmates whom the Germans would not have had time to kill. It was during the "unnecessary" period of the war that the blood-smeared apes dispatched their greatest number of victims.

But what I think about now, reading Allen, is the political consequences that might have followed a correct command decision in that fateful September. The Soviet armies were then fighting deep in Poland. With the western front cracking as suddenly and completely as the Normandy front had in summer, not even Stalin could have expected the Allied Armies to stop short of Berlin. He would in fact have asked them to come along as quickly as possible, to attack the rear of the powerful German eastern forces opposing him. The prestige of the *coup de grâce* would have rested with us, and the Russians would have been in the position of coming into Germany at our invitation. Prague, Vienna and Budapest would have been occupied from the west by our men, because there were no Soviet forces near them. Most important of all, in my opinion, we would have had a man named Franklin D. Roosevelt to play our diplomatic hand for us. And I think he would have played it so magnanimously that he would have established a firm basis of mutual confidence between the Russians and us. Great Britain, richer by her saving on seven months of war, would be in a relatively sound economic condition today.

Even Japan might have quit before the Summer of 1945, and then it would not have been necessary to drop the atom bombs. A friend of mine who was killed at Metz in November and another over Okinawa in the spring might still be alive. And Ernie Pyle might be writing his column to this day. You cannot rule a guy off for dreaming.

Lucky Forward, aside from its confirmation of a story that has always fascinated me, is a pleasant book to read if you were with Third Army and if you thought Patton was wonderful. The two were not always synonymous, although Allen implies they were. I have known many Third Army soldiers who were less than enthusiastic about their distinguished leader, who was in some ways the largest small boy in the world. "Blood and Guts—his guts and our blood," is a gag that Allen does not include in his repertory of cute things the ever-loving soldiery said about Patton. I fail to share the author's (and Patton's) conviction that wearing neckties makes officers more efficient, or that whoop-de-doo and cock feathers help win a war. I have seen too many easygoing soldiers perform well. Phil Cochran's P-40 pilots in Tunisia, unshaved, unwashed and standing in the chow line with their enlisted men, fought several grades better than anything I ever saw wearing polished boots. What a man fights in is irrelevant, immaterial and incompetent as long as it is comfortable. Fear is like seasickness—everybody has his pet remedy, which has no rational basis and won't help anybody else. Georgie Patton thought he could palliate fear by talking tough and wearing fancy clothes. He was an anxious, brain-straining, conscientious, uninspired commander who had learned his trade as he had learned

Continued on page 176

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Sole UNITED STATES *Importers:* WILLIAMS IMPORTERS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Two Big Ifs

Continued from page 175

polo, with great effort, but rather well. I can never forget that he attained his highest polo handicap when he was forty-seven years old.

Patton liked the idea of being a soldier. If the German Intelligence reports cited by Allen rated Patton above all other American generals it was, I fear, because he approached most nearly the German concept of a general. The outstanding feature of German intelligence was its unintelligence. Patton, it is true, was on the right side of all the big arguments in France—because he was on Bradley's side.

The Assault (Simon and Schuster, $2.50) by Allen R. Matthews, is a very different sort of a war book from *Lucky Forward*, but it also evokes an image of what might have been. It is a book about the experiences of one Marine of the Fourth Division in twelve days on Iwo Jima, and it makes you think about what might have happened if we hadn't dropped the atom bombs, and if American fighting men had been forced to win every square yard of the Japanese islands by the conventional methods of waging war.

Bob Gallivan

Matthews, a young newspaperman before the war, was the Marine private. When people a hundred or five hundred years from now want to know what it was like fighting in the last great infantry war—for I suppose they will be killing each other with jet-propelled germs by then—they will read Matthews, for he has set down a terrifyingly exact record of the individual combat. Unfortunately for the author, his potential readers now seem to be divided into two classes—about one million who want to forget what it was like and about 140,000,000 others who don't want to hear about it.

Bill Mauldin, who contributed an introduction to *The Assault*, wrote with great fairness, "Those of us lucky enough to deliver our stuff early were blessed with large sales, because people then were interested in the war and the guys in it . . . In view of the fact that Matthews was too busy digging sand out of his rifle and metal fragments out of his hide to come through earlier with this volume, the public's apathy toward war books seems hardly fair." The book has, as a matter of fact, sold less than 5000 copies since publication last summer, which, when you think of the sales of joke books like *See Here, Private Hargrove*, and phonies like *A Walk in the Sun*, is a pretty grim confirmation of Bill Mauldin's foreboding.

Matthews, then 31, was the oldest man in his company at Iwo and was habitually addressed as Pop. When he was relieved, an exhaustion case, after twelve days, he was the last survivor of his squad, one of the four last men in his platoon.

"I couldn't run because of the weight of the gear and of the water can," he writes, telling of the landing from the assault boat, "and because of the sand into which I sank up to my calves so that every step was a conscious uprooting of my feet and placing them one in front of the other and my weight seemed to grow (it had, from the sand clinging to my wet feet and legs) and I said to myself *run* but I only shuffled and staggered and something compelled me to look back to my right (I don't remember any sound but it must have been there) and the beach sand spouted up like black water from a geyser . . . Then I saw someone in front of me drop the ammunition which he carried and I released my grip on the water can."

From then on things got worse. Moving forward from the beach to a series of foxholes and back under fire from one hole to another encountering Marines from his own platoon and exchanging information about who was dead, who wounded, cowering under mortar fire and big-shell blast, almost never seeing the enemy (except for an occasional corpse), having little opportunity to fight back. Matthews got one chance to fire his rifle during the whole twelve days. Fear and fatigue, fatigue and fear, to be mastered continually lest the man become a burden upon his comrades, each of whom was going through the same struggle.

Matthews is sure the Japanese were frightened too. They were not captured alive, he notes, but they often killed themselves too soon, blowing themselves up with their own grenades when they still had chances to inflict casualties on the Americans. He concludes that they were literally frightened to death.

The struggle inside the man, inside so many men simultaneously, is the chief wonder of battle.

The Assault, in addition to being a great book of its kind, is a reminder of what might have happened if we hadn't thrown our fast one. ⧻

Continued from page 58

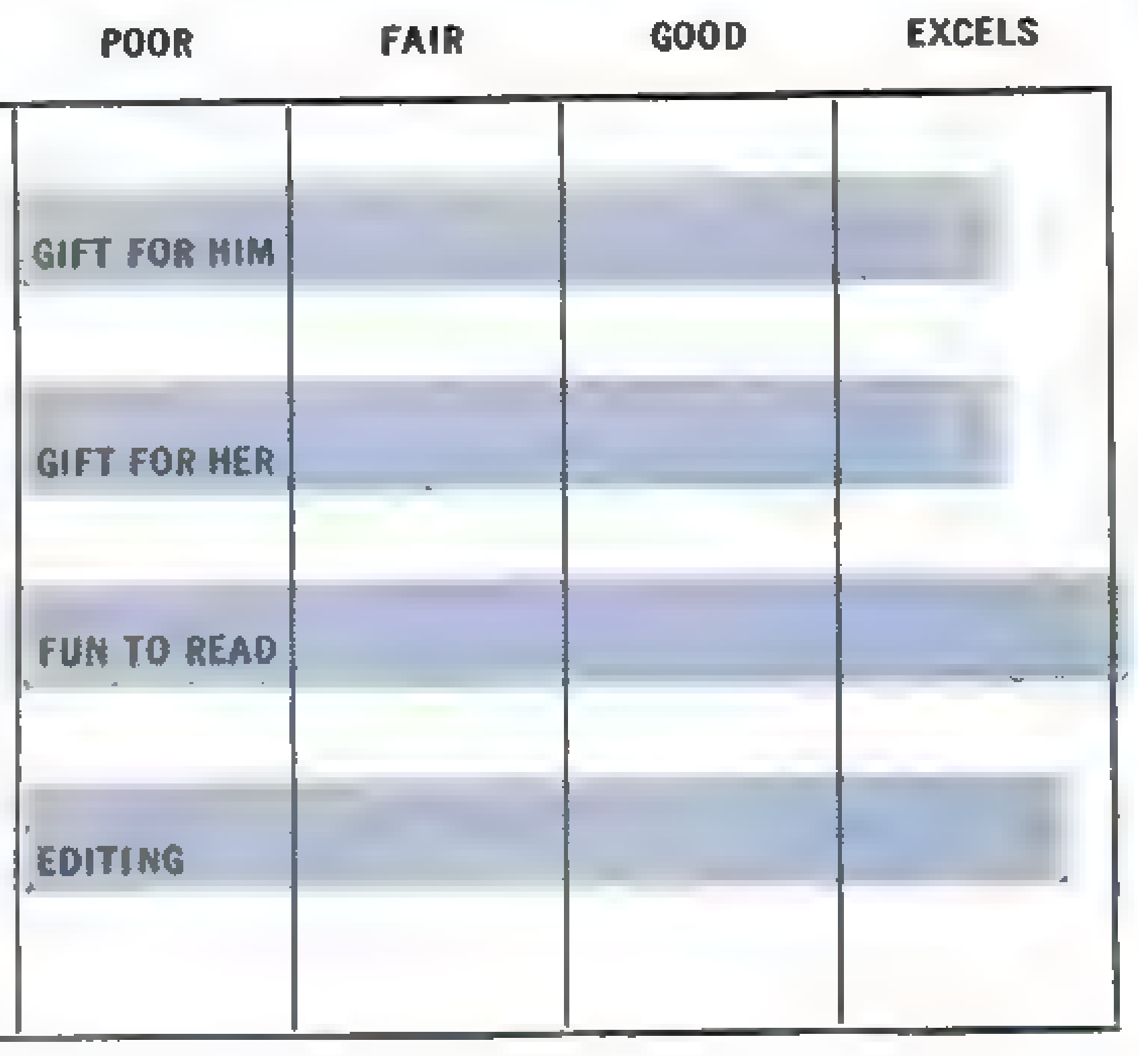
Book Briefs

Some recent anthologies which provide pleasant reading and an easy solution to last-minute Christmas gift problems

Taken at the Flood

Collected by Ann Watkins
(Harper, $3.00)

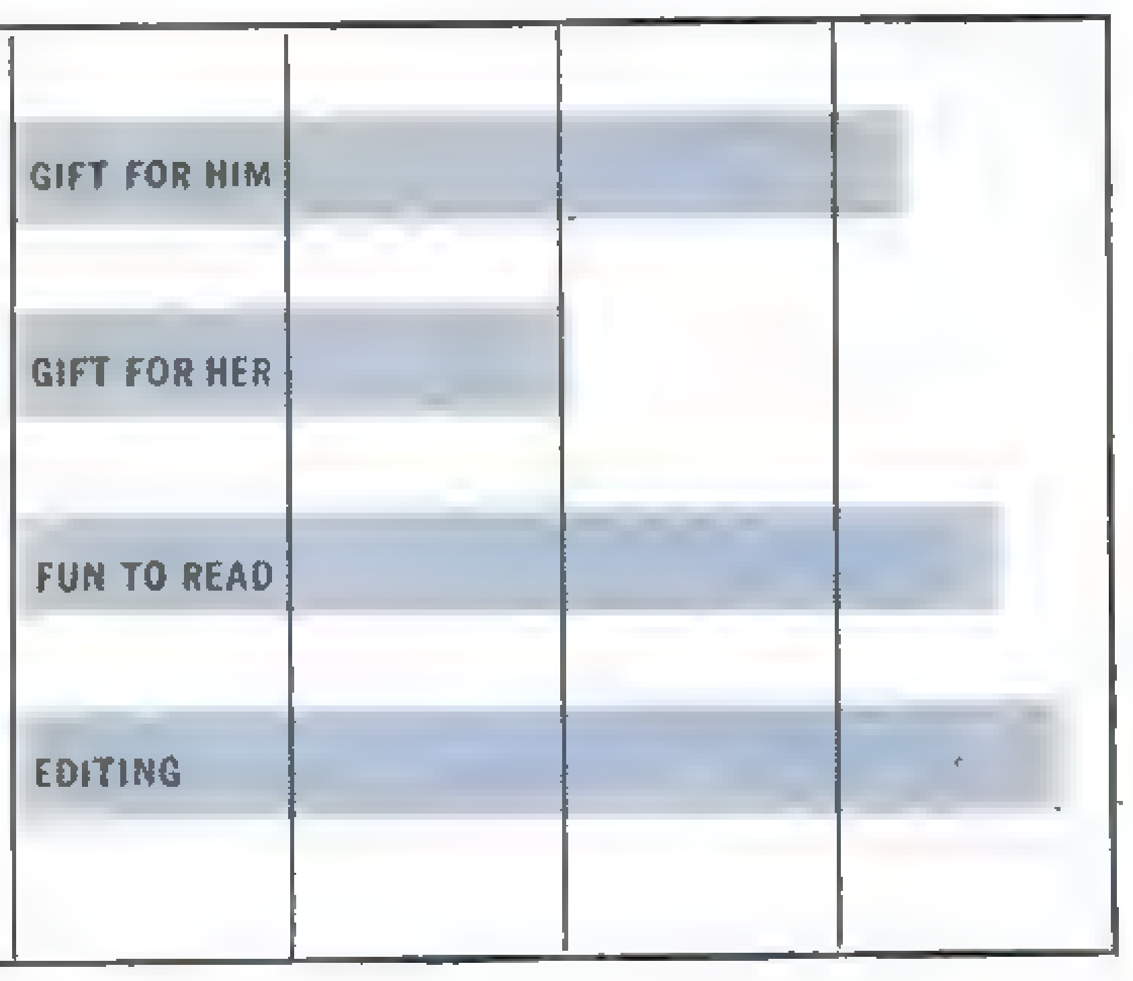
Excerpts of 3000 to 5000 words taken from the works of Hemingway, Steinbeck, Wolfe, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and many others. Scenes chosen for emotional intensity and excellence of expression.



Travelers in Time

Edited by Philip Van Doren Stern
(Doubleday, $3.50)

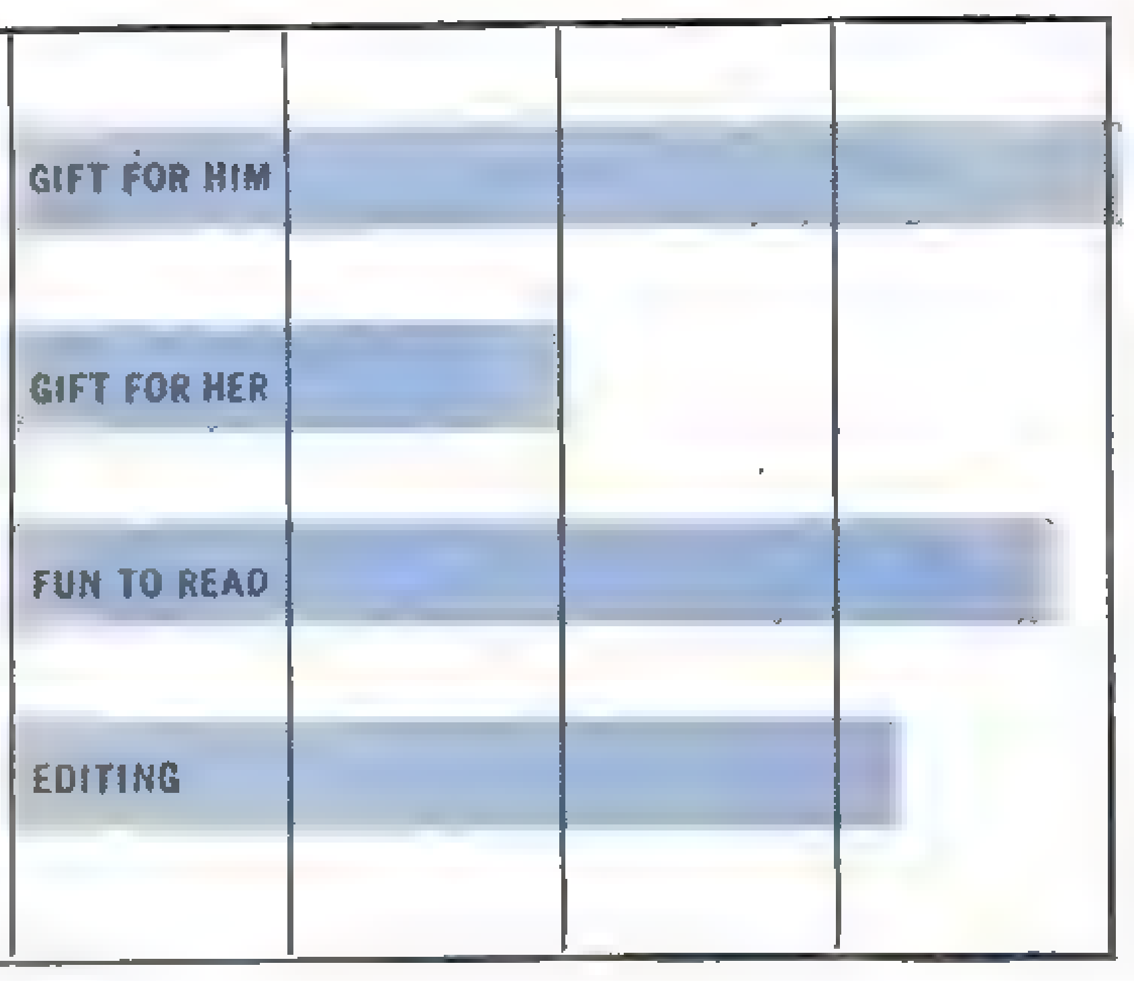
Twenty-four tales of fantasy all dealing with Time—standing still, turning back, racing ahead—and the consequent effects it has on the humdrum affairs of men as we know them. Authors include Wells, Beerbohm, Lawrence, etc.



Esquire's Second Sports Reader

Edited by Arnold Gingrich
(Barnes, $2.75)

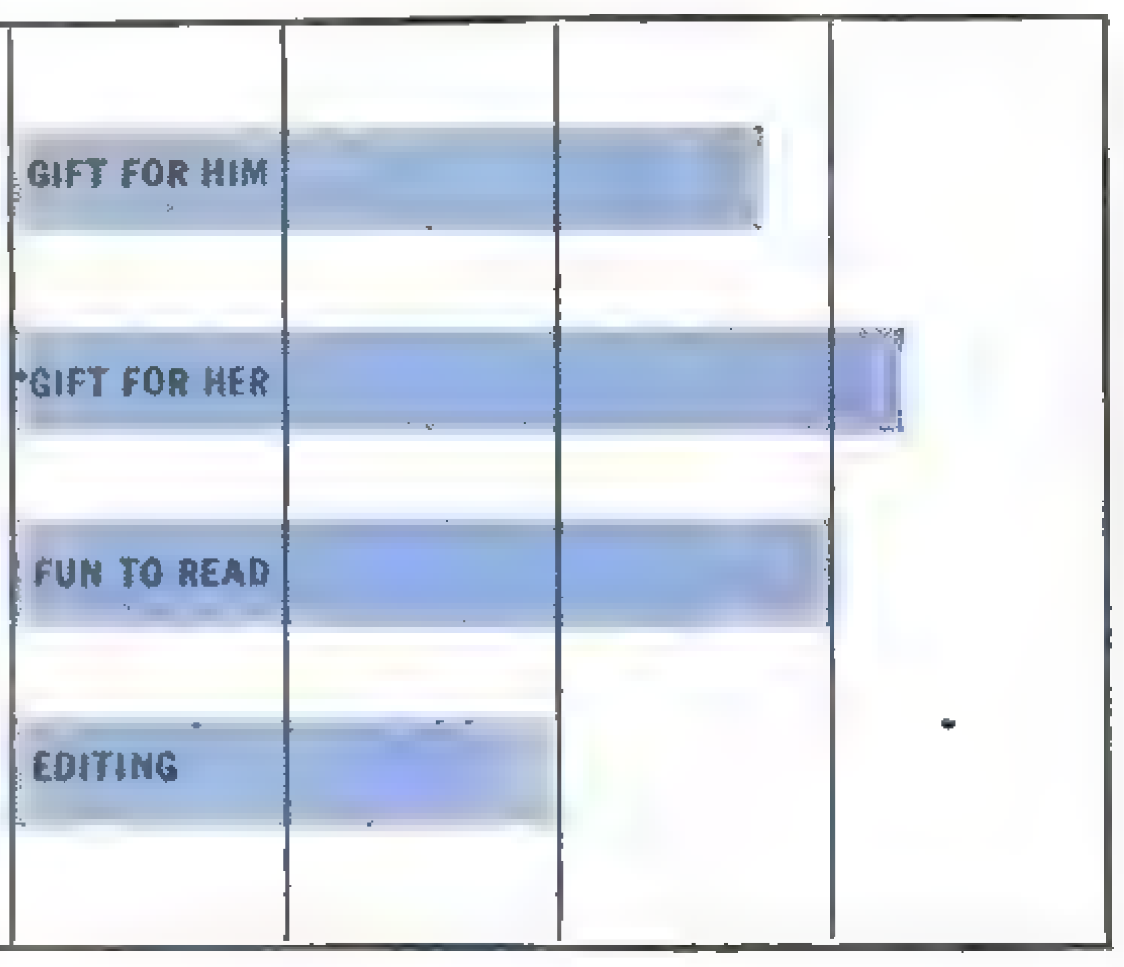
Fifty pieces of fiction on all manner of sports and athletes. Writers contributing include Shaw, Hemingway, Gallico, Kieran and Aiken. All stories previously appeared in this magazine.



S. R. O.

Compiled by Cerf & Cartmell
(Garden City, $1.98)

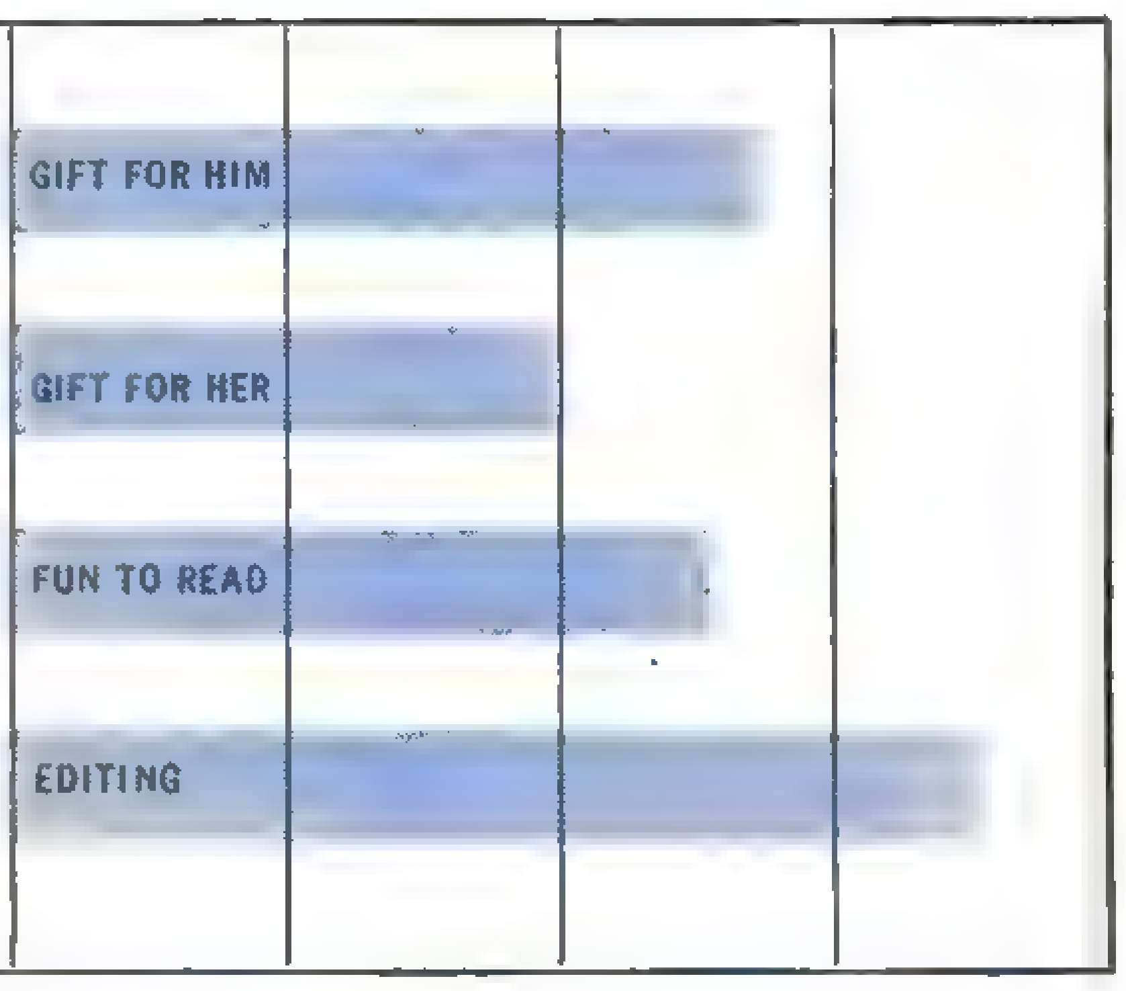
An economical edition of American plays that have proved the biggest hits of all, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to *Oklahoma!* John Chapman has written a thorough and illuminating introduction.

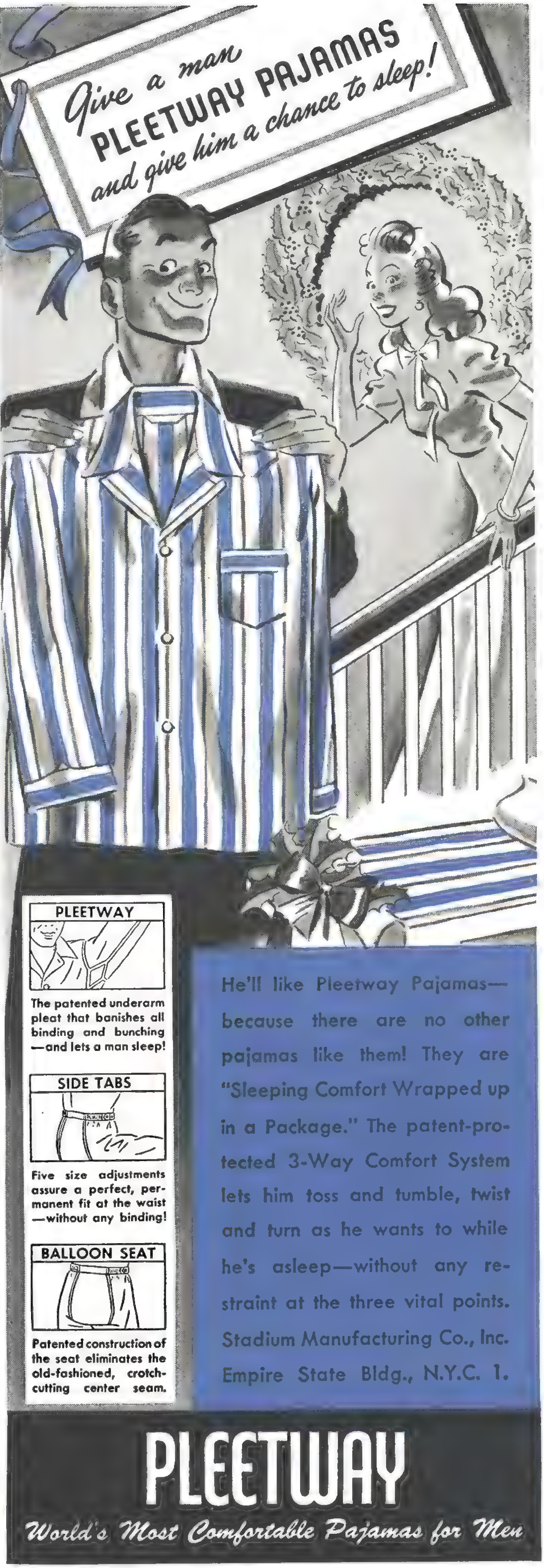


Villainy Detected

Collected by
Lillian de la Torre
(Appleton-Century, $3.00)

Concerning 18th-century criminals, highwaymen and pirates, with contemporary accounts by such authors as Andrew Lang, Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. Introduction and notes give necessary background.

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and give him a chance to sleep!
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The patented underarm pleat that banishes all binding and bunching—and lets a man sleep!

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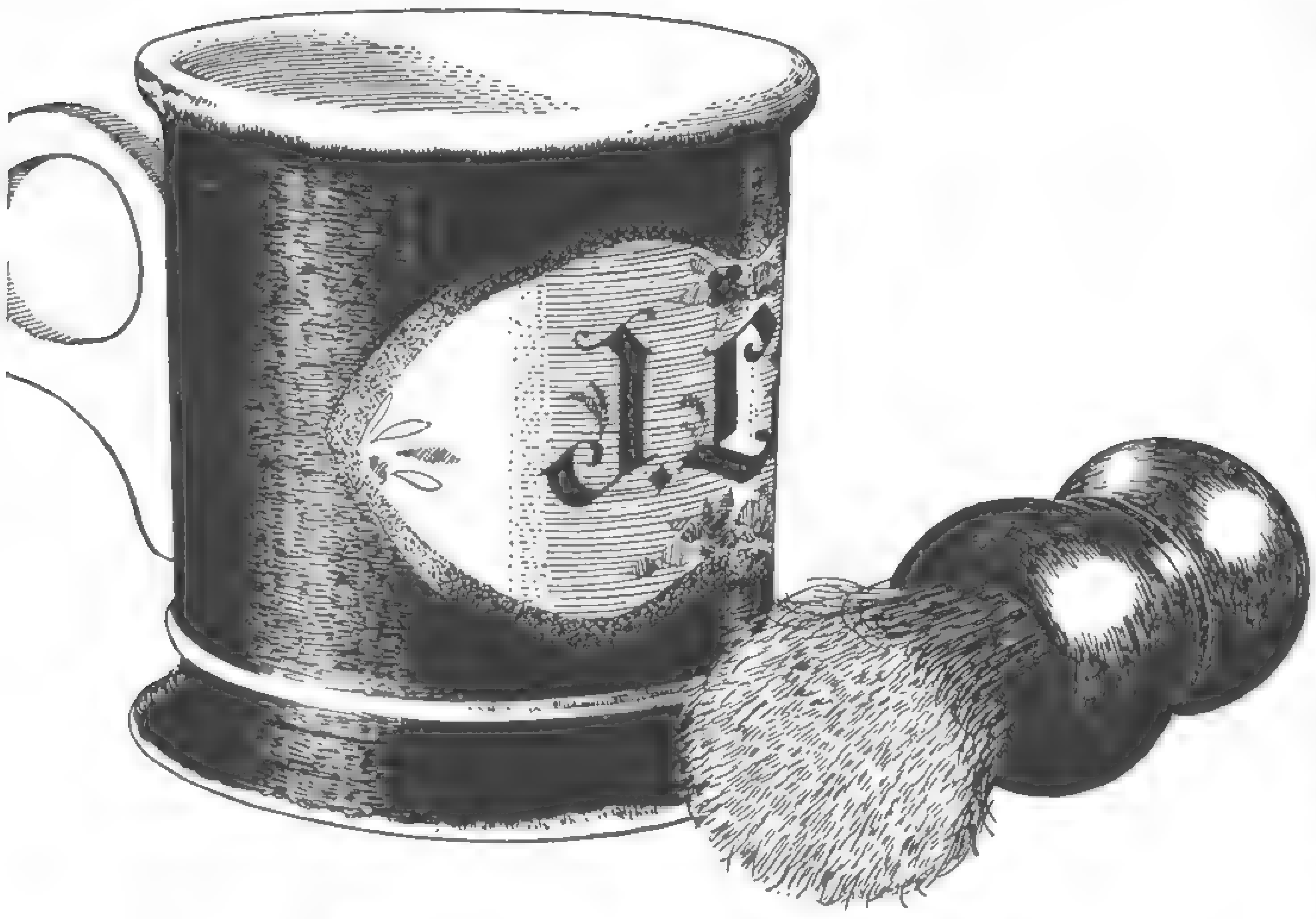

GOOD for conversation

There's no place like the barber shop to talk things over. And there's nothing like a mellow Dutch Masters to call up memories of the good old days when a man had his own initialed mug, and this great cigar was the same fine smoke.

DUTCH MASTERS CIGARS

Hollywood's Ivory Hunters

Continued from page 90

penses add up to a $3000 loss.

To the hard-bitten scouting fraternity, screen tests are entirely unexciting, but actors facing the camera for the first time often make unprintable "fluffs" on their lines, and sound-room technicians can tell you plenty about sulphurous asides of beauties who couldn't have gone to Sunday school.

Recently a humorless ham actor was making his initial test for a certain studio. He insisted on appearing in a gypsy's short leather pants, and had cameramen and grips in the aisles when he played a torrid love scene with underdrawers sagging. Cameramen recorded the ham's horrified discovery of his droopy drawers . . . his stealthy efforts to hike them up while embracing his gypsy love . . . his furious exit from the stage.

Besides its own tests, each studio views about five hundred unsolicited movie films and stills a year. The material ranges from snapshots of middle-aged ladies offered as Marie Dressler's successors to elaborate semiprofessional action pictures.

Talent scouts agree that amateur screen tests are seldom satisfactory. Hopefuls knock themselves out to get effect. The movies want clear shots showing the individual's relaxed personality, full face, full length, walking and turning. They also want to know age, weight, height, and experience.

In New York each studio interviews from fifty to a hundred movies aspirants a week. Talent scouts welcome visits from youngsters with good looks or ability in acting, singing or dancing.

Talent sleuths cherish anonymity when on the road because they lack secretarial protection against bird imitators, mamas with precocious tots, and other menaces to society. Further, they don't want performers to know that they are in the audience. Best seats and ringside tables are avoided because the talent gentry prefer not to repay favors by giving managers and producers any opinion on show or cast. This reluctance is understandable when you see the typical comments they pencil on programs:

Cast	*Talent Scout's Comment*
Bill Jones	thin tight mouth and blonde, about 29
Sam Brown	lousy burlesque comic
Ann White	can't tell with all that make-up
Frank Doe	large half-wit actor
Joe Roe	small half-wit actor
Jane King	very pretty in her golden hair, very clever comedienne
Gloria Green	!

Ask talent scouts what stars

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they themselves discovered and they will snap their jaws shut and look out the window. The trade is acutely sensitive to the fate of any scout who declares that he, and not some big-shot West Coast producer, discovered a new star.

However, the New York contingent were the first to spot many currently ranking stars, including Gregory Peck, Gene Kelly and William Bendix. Van Johnson was tapped when a chorus boy in a Broadway musical; Tyrone Power and Gene Tierney were plucked from plays. Beverly Tyler had been a choir singer in Scranton, Pennsylvania, before a scout signed her, and Lucille Bremer in a night-club girlie line. Paramount found Joan Caulfield in a George Abbott play; Katina Paxinou, when a scout saw her picture in a news story about the sinking of a Greek vessel. Fred MacMurray was discovered blowing a saxophone in the stage version of *Roberta*. Maureen O'Hara was spotted in a Dublin restaurant by a New York man, and Dorothy McGuire was snapped up after her performance in *Claudia*.

Experience gives movie scouts the knack to spot talent at split-second speed. Willi explains, "It's largely a matter of personality. We can pretty-up homely mugs or do the thinking for dumb dolls, but we can't supply magnetism. When I see a newcomer whose warm personality pulls me practically out of my seat, I get buck-fever."

A talent scout, Willi avers, must be able to survive fifty thousand miles of travel a year, plus the creative efforts of amateur pen-pushers and stage designers.

Case-hardened scouts like Willi start out on a trip to Philadelphia, and wind up three days later in Roanoke, Virginia, to inspect a trained seal. Sandwiched between the two have been a Triangle Club show in Princeton, a night-club opening in Atlantic City, a tryout in Wilmington, and a dance group in Washington. They are given this hectic schedule by secretaries who keep track of openings, prospects to be interviewed, special types to be found for the West Coast casting department. The moment a scout says he is headed for, say, Providence, Rhode Island, his Girl Friday whips out an arm-long list of stopovers along the way.

Many scouts haven't had a vacation in twenty years and claim they don't need one. Arthur Willi, for example. Last summer he looked peaked, and Mrs. W. shanghaied him off to a quiet village in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. On the day following their arrival, Arthur heard about some new straw-hat theatres.

"My wife was fine about it," he recalls complacently. "There wasn't a show we missed within fifty miles!" #

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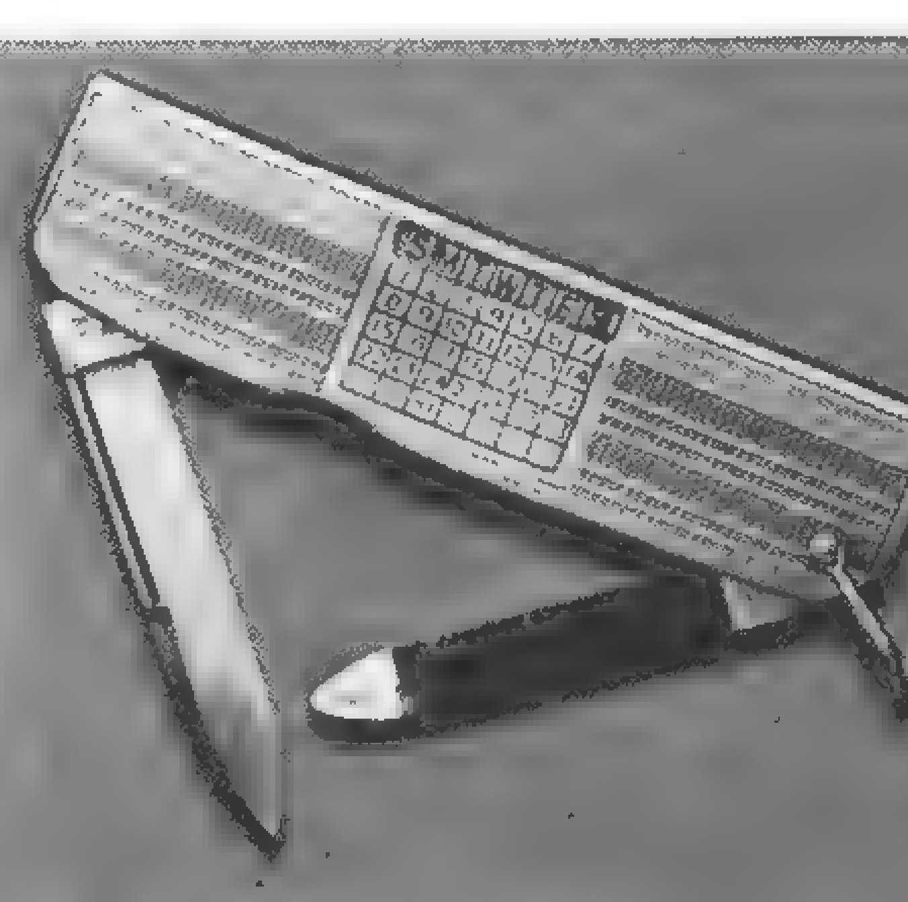

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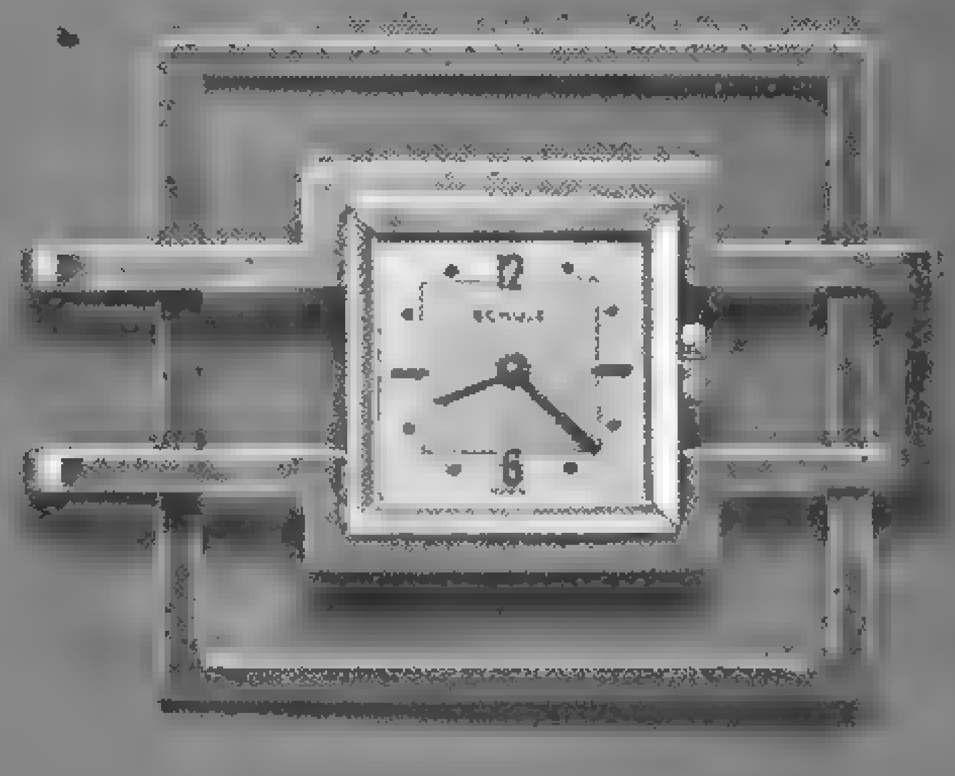

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Compact about $7.50.
Cigarette case
about $10.00.

AT ALL FINE STORES

The Better Part of Valor

Continued from page 49

on the table and slid one to me.

"Here," he said, "the doctor prescribes another pill."

She took off the heavy coat and hung it by the door. I tried not to look at her, but she seemed to be everywhere I looked.

"And here, Eileen," he said, "is one for you, to drink with us."

She took the glass and drank it swiftly, at one swallow. Her face had no expression. Somehow, the way she drank that drink, fast, as though she needed it, meant something to me. I thought: *Maybe I'm not alone in this.*

I sat down at the table with the drink before me, knowing that I shouldn't drink it. But I did, slowly, and the sunlight in my head got brighter all the time. The doctor went over to a radio set and began turning the dials.

"With wine, now, or beer, I like to listen to the symphony. But sometimes, with applejack, I like a little hot-cha."

The radio droned, getting warmed up, and then it cut into *St. Louis Blues.* He began to shuffle around in time to the music, like a big dancing bear, and went over and grabbed her and swung her into a clumsy fox trot. When he put his arms around her I finished my drink. I didn't watch, but heard her say: "Please, Paul. Please. I've got to start supper."

As I put my glass down the telephone rang somewhere, two short and one long. He stopped dancing and turned the radio down to half-volume and went out into the hall. Finally, I heard him say: "All right, all right. Tell her to wait till I get there."

When he came back he was grinning and shaking his head. "They want me at Hildick's, Eileen. Mrs. Hildick has decided she is going to have her baby right now." He turned to me. "That is Cora Hildick for you; she is a member of the W. C. T. U. and she has been holding that baby back all afternoon, I'll bet you, waiting for me to get a glass of applejack in my hand."

She went over to the cupboard and came back with a little box.

"Here, Paul," she said. "You had better take some of these."

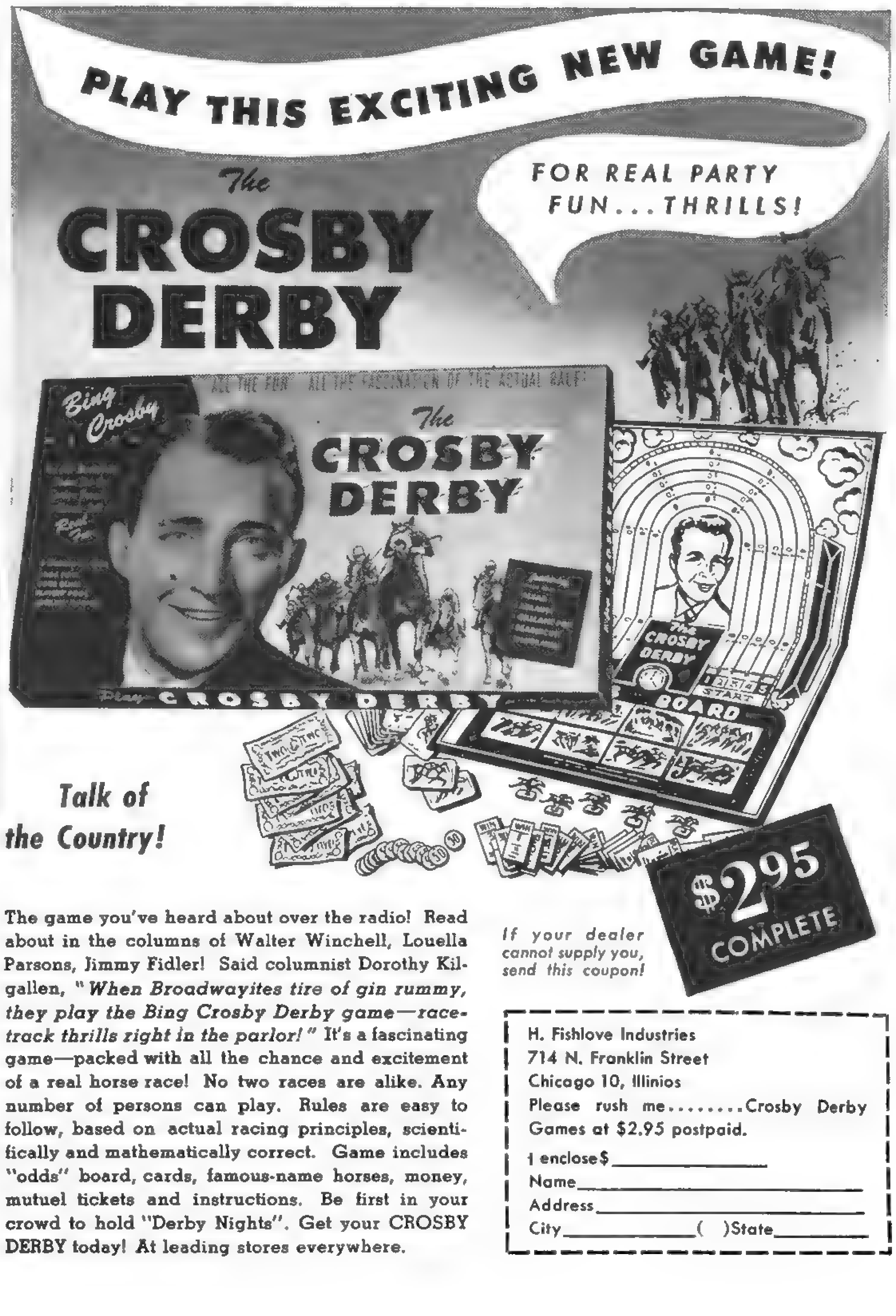
He threw back his head and laughed his childish laugh.

"Oh, yes. Almost I forgot my cloves for the W.C.T.U."

I stood up, not knowing what to say. I knew that if he were going I had to get away quick.

"Look," I said. "I must be getting back."

"Now, now," he said, taking his hat off the hook on the wall. "It is all settled. You're going to have some supper and if everything goes well at Hildick's I'll



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be back soon. We'll have a nice evening. Maybe I'll play the piano for you and Mrs. Kiedrowski will sing." He put his arm around her. "Wait till you hear her sing."

"Really . . ." I said. But he interrupted me.

"Tell me, how are you going to go, anyway, without your trousers? See, they are not dry yet."

"It is very kind of you to ask me to stay," I said. "But . . ."

"It is all settled, I tell you," he said, and went out the door and down the hall and then I heard the car go tearing down the lane.

I stood there, filled with that crazy sunlight and fear and terrible excitement, turning the empty glass around and around in my hand. I thought: *I've done all that I could, haven't I, I've been all right, and now that he's gone I can look at her.* The radio was still playing softly, the *St. Louis Blues*, and I found myself following the melody, untangling it from the syncopation. My hands were clammy and my heart was drumming like a set of traps. I heard her walk over to the table and I let myself look. She was pouring applejack into a glass. She poured it into two glasses. Her eyes weren't blue now; they were almost as black as her hair.

"I am going to have a drink, right now," she said softly. "Won't you have one with me?"

I watched my hand go out for the glass; and I saw that her hand was trembling, just as mine was, as she gave it to me. My hand shook so by the time I got the drink to my mouth that some of it spilled down my chin. She took a handkerchief from the front of her dress and handed it to me. I managed to smile a little as I wiped off my face, although I didn't feel like smiling at all.

"You're pretty tired, aren't you?" she said.

"I was pretty well bushed a while ago," I said, trying to make my voice sound natural, "but now I don't feel tired at all."

She sipped at her drink as though it were something hot.

"Was it pretty bad in the water?" she asked.

"Yes, it was pretty bad," I said. "I've almost forgotten about it."

She opened the table drawer and began putting out knives and forks. The applejack sunlight in my head was beginning to fill the room, and I stood there, watching her, as though I had never seen anyone set a table before. I remember that the knives and forks had bone handles. It was a bone-handled fork that she dropped on the floor, while I stared at her.

We both went over at the same time to pick it up. It was as though we were bowing to each other. My head was so close to hers that I could smell her hair, and our hands touched in the air, just over the fork. I can remember thinking: *Something is going*

Continued on page 182

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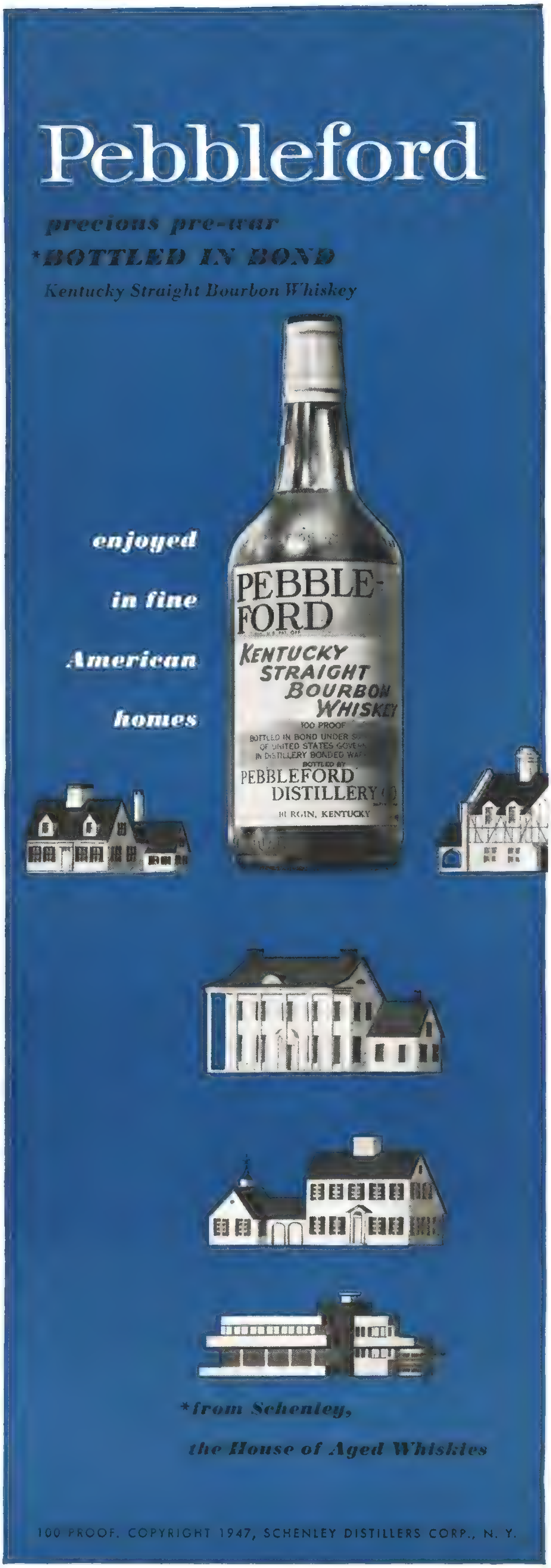
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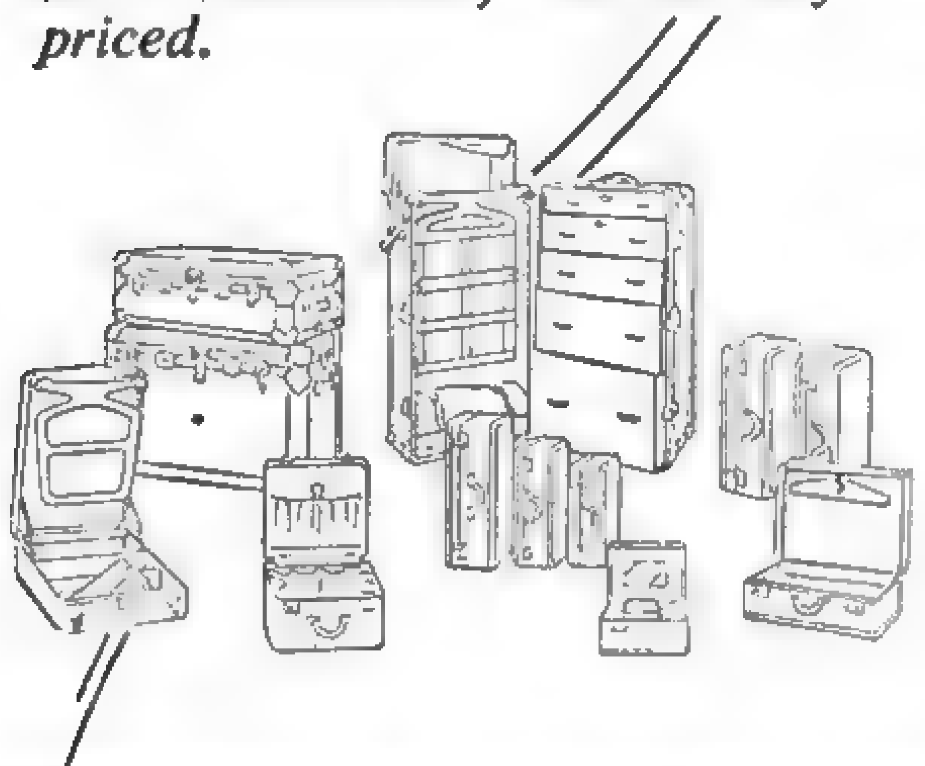

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The Better Part of Valor

Continued from page 181

to happen now, something has to happen to break this moment of waiting. And then it happened.

I heard a low whine and I looked over my shoulder. There was the setter bitch, looking at me with those soft, worried eyes. And right then, like a flashback, I saw myself sitting propped against a tree by the river, the dog's eyes on a level with my own, as they were now, and I heard the doctor's voice saying: "I guess we feel a little better now, eh?" And all at once the room, which had been full of her, was full of the doctor and his hearty voice and his childish laugh. I stood up, swaying a little, and I let her pick up the fork.

"My God," I said. Maybe I shouted it. "I must be crazy. I must have lost my mind."

She didn't say a word. She just stood there.

"Understand?"

She put the fork down on the table, in the place that would have been mine.

"Certainly I understand," she said. "Of course I understand."

She turned and stared out of the window at the dark, tossing trees on the lawn. I became conscious of the radio, still playing softly, and of a radio voice saying something about "a half-hour of romance." She began to laugh and then stopped abruptly. She sat down in a chair at the end of the table and put her head in her arms. The setter came over, click-click across the linoleum, and put its head on her knee. Her voice was muffled: "Please go."

I stopped at the door. "Good-by," I said.

She almost whispered it. "Good-by."

The last time I saw her she was sitting there at the table with her head in her arms and the lamplight on her hair.

As I went down the hallway the radio came up, full volume.

I thought: *She's turned the radio up so she won't hear me going.* I ran stumbling all the way down the lane to the highway because I was afraid if I didn't run I'd turn around and go back. For a minute after I got to the highway I thought I was going to be sick, but the night air was cool and sweet and I felt better after I had walked a while. A colored fellow in a big produce truck picked me up a quarter mile down the road.

"Where're you going?" I asked him, not caring a lot.

"Chicago."

I tried to get some sleep, but there was too much vibration. After a while I felt in the pockets of Doctor Kiedrowski's trousers, hoping to find a cigarette, and pulled out a little white handkerchief. There was only one thing to do with it. I gave it to the wind. I leaned out and looked back and saw it for an instant, like a dim, white flower by the roadside. ⧺

Continued from page 49

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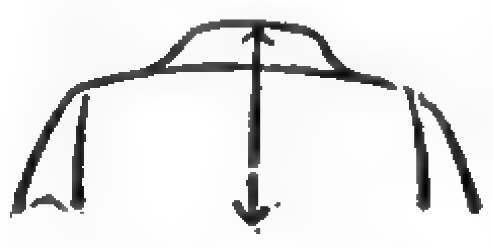

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They fit!

Right to Privacy

Continued from page 57

caren just put me in this picture as a sort of—test."

"Screen—or character?" Mr. Potter smiled.

Mary smiled too, and Mr. Potter thought that she was even lovelier—when she smiled.

"Perhaps neither," she said thoughtfully. "He had me pose for some stills and scenes of the picture. Anyway, if I'm good, Mr. Bouscaren says *that's* the time to start talking contract. So far we haven't signed a thing between us."

Mr. Potter nodded sagely. Then his eyes narrowed.

"You like Bouscaren?"

"Well," she said hesitantly, "y-yes—I guess so. So far. Why?"

Mr. Potter looked at her quizzically. "I was wondering."

"About Mr. Bouscaren?"

"No," Mr. Potter smiled. "About Bob Turner."

The cream suddenly drained out of the strawberries.

"Just—why did you ask me to lunch?" Mary demanded.

"Figured it would be a good idea," Mr. Potter said. "Young Turner's a friend of mine."

"Well, I think he's a heel."

"Maybe I can change your opinion," Mr. Potter said gently. Then he related what young Turner had told him a few hours before. But when he finished, her eyes flashed.

"I don't believe a word of it," she snapped.

"Good," Mr. Potter grinned. "Tells me what I want to know."

"What do you mean?"

"We're always ready to believe the worst—about someone we love," he said pleasantly.

"If you think I love that—that—weasel—you're crazy!"

"If you think you don't," Mr. Potter chuckled, "*you* are!"

Usually, on his return from lunch, Mr. Potter lingered in the outer office for a chat, but this time he went straight to his bookshelves, found the leather-bound volume he was looking for, slumped down upon the divan, and riffled through its pages.

Twenty minutes later he snapped the lawbook closed and, chuckling heartily, bellowed for Wendy.

"Sex is a wonderful thing," he chortled. "Practically an anesthetic. Takes a fellow's mind right off his work. Studio has a staff of lawyers bigger than Coxey's army—just to keep 'em out of trouble—but a little female with big eyes and nice ankles can knock their combined efforts into a cocked hat. Funny!"

"Is that news?" Wendy asked drily.

Mr. Potter replaced the volume, and sat down behind his desk.

"Now," he said, "I want you to phone the trade papers. Tell 'em you've got a nice juicy item for their gossip columns. Tell 'em Paul Bouscaren's protégée—Mary Foster, who's making her screen debut in Metronome's *Rainbow's*

Continued on page 184

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Right to Privacy

Continued from page 183

End—and Robert Turner, the assistant director, are flying to Las Vegas to be married."

Wendy's eyes popped. "Are they really?"

"Who knows," Mr. Potter said.

"Oh," Wendy nodded, "so that's what you're trying to promote!"

"Not trying to promote anything," Mr. Potter snapped. "I'm trying to sell a house!"

Variety and the *Hollywood Reporter*, which carried the items next morning, hit the streets at nine o'clock. Wendy knocked at Mr. Potter's door an hour later.

"Mr. Turner is here," she said.

"Expected he would be." Mr. Potter folded the legal document he had been reading and tucked it in his inside jacket pocket. "Show him in. And you'd better phone this Mary Foster."

"Why?" Wendy asked.

Mr. Potter smiled. "She might want to know where he is!"

"He doesn't look very happy," Wendy said pointedly.

"Probably isn't."

Turner shuffled in like a young man on the brink of despair, collapsed on the divan, and threw up his hands forlornly.

"I'm finished," he said glumly. "It happened—just like I told you. There was an item in the papers about Mary and me going up to Las Vegas to be married—and two minutes after Mr. Bouscaren read it—boom—I'm fired. And that isn't all. Mary too. She's been fired! I'm cooked. Finished! And all because some nitwit had to put that in the paper."

Wendy looked at Mr. Potter. Then she looked at Turner.

"Say that last part again—won't you?" she asked sweetly.

Then with a scathing glance at Mr. Potter she flounced into her own office.

"What are we going to do?" Turner sighed.

"Why don't you do what it says in the papers? Go to Las Vegas—get married. Might as well have the game as the name!"

"No use now." Turner rose and began to pace angrily. "I'd like to lay my hands on whoever gave that story to the papers," he said.

"I gave it to the papers," Mr. Potter said pleasantly.

"You?" Turner whirled on him—his eyes wide with amazement.

"Me," Mr. Potter said.

"But—but—I told you what would happen if Mr. Bouscaren found out I was seeing Mary—I told you . . ."

"I remember," Mr. Potter said. "I counted on it."

"But—but why?" Turner moaned.

"The way to beat an issue, Buster, is to meet it. Had this hanging over your head a long time. Now you know where you stand. You're free!"

"Free—my foot! I'm fired! Now what are you going to do?" Turner demanded.

"Going to see if I can't arrange

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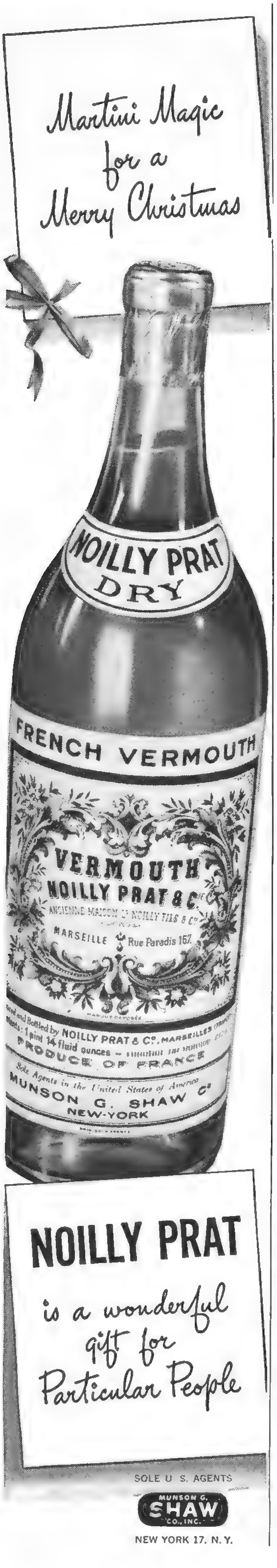
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it so you can buy that house."

"House!" Turner snapped. "I don't need a house. I need a job!"

"Might see if I can't fix that too, while I'm at it," he said.

"You've fixed things good—already," Turner muttered glumly.

Mr. Potter picked up his hat. "Believe I'll go see Bouscaren. Suggest you wait."

Paul Bouscaren, son-in-law of Henri Le Blanc, Production Head of Metronome Studios, was short, plump and pompous; a man with the physique of a Pekinese and the belligerence of a bull terrier. He was sitting in a corner of an incongruously massive chair, with his pipestem legs curled under him, tailor-fashion—half hidden behind a vast, circular desk, when Mr. Potter barged in. He scowled at the unheralded interruption.

"How are you, Paul?" Mr. Potter asked pleasantly.

Bouscaren merely grunted, and Mr. Potter sat down without waiting to be asked.

"Hear you fired the Foster girl," he said pleasantly. Bouscaren scowled.

"Potter," he said, "you're a smart man. You are also a good lawyer. But you got a bad trait. Why don't you mind your own business?"

"Expect minding other people's business *is* my business. Besides, the girl's my client, and I thought maybe you'd reconsider."

Bouscaren snapped, "She is also an ingrate. What's more—legally she don't even work here so firing her is a mere formality. Now are you satisfied?" Mr. Potter rose.

"Quite," he said. "And incidentally—how's the picture?"

"In spite of her even, it's a smash—naturally," Bouscaren said.

"Hmm," Mr. Potter said. "Too bad. I hear you're going to have to reshoot it."

"You—you hear what?" Bouscaren thundered. "Who says so?"

"I do," Mr. Potter said pleasantly.

"Look, I'm in no humor for jokes—especially when they ain't funny. What do you mean?"

"Mean you've got to quit pushing people around this way, Paul. If you expect to release this picture, you're going to have to reshoot it without Mary Foster!"

Bouscaren leaped to his feet. His face was white and his eyes blazed.

"Are you crazy?" he screamed. "Reshoot five weeks' takes—because some sorehead gets herself a smart lawyer? You make me laugh! Why—it would cost a million and a half at least to reshoot it!"

"Figure it would," Mr. Potter said pleasantly.

"Are you trying to tell me that a producer can't fire who he wants—without he has to waste a lot of time with lawyers?"

"No," Mr. Potter smiled. "I'm trying to tell you that before you fire 'em—you've got to hire 'em—first!"

He took an envelope out of his pocket, and tossed it to Bouscaren.

"I'm trying to tell you," he

Continued on page 186

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Right to Privacy

Continued from page 185

went on, "that it's time you fellows stopped acting like a lot of little tin gods—running and ruining a lot of little people. I'm going to teach you a lesson, Paul! I know why you fired Mary Foster; know why you fired Turner, too! Not because they weren't doing their jobs, but because they were interfering with your plans! Well, it's time you boys stopped using jobs as though they were clubs! Foster and Turner are nice clean kids. They're going to be married—whether you like it or not! And they're going to live happily ever after on what they get out of this! That's an injunction I've just tossed on your desk. Read it—and if I were you, I'd talk it over with the legal department. Morning, Paul, and regards—to your wife!"

Wendy greeted him anxiously when he returned to the office. "Henri Le Blanc's called—about five times," she said.

Mr. Potter nodded. "Turner still here?"

Wendy shook her head. "He left a few minutes after you did. Miss Foster came for him."

Mr. Potter frowned. "Say where they were going?"

"No," Wendy sighed, "but judging by their expressions—they were looking for some nice, deep river. Shall I call Mr. Le Blanc back?"

"No," Mr. Potter said.

"You don't want to talk to him?"

"Not now. When he calls again you might tell him you're expecting me at four."

He lumbered into his office, removed his shoes and jacket, and stretched out comfortably on the divan. He was snoring peacefully when the phone rang. He rose, yawned, rubbed his eyes, and waddled to his desk.

"Four o'clock," Wendy said. "And Le Blanc's on the wire."

Mr. Potter grinned. He picked up the receiver. He was about to say, "Hello, Henri," when Mary and Turner entered. He covered the mouthpiece with his hand.

"Where you been?" he demanded, scowling.

"We just—answered a couple of ads," Mary said.

Turner nodded. "We've been looking for a job."

"Been looking in the wrong place," Mr. Potter growled. "Sit down."

He uncovered the mouthpiece. "Hello, Henri," he said.

Henri Le Blanc wasted no time on the amenities.

"Listen, Potter," he raged. "You could bluff Paul—on account he is only a son-in-law—but you ain't bluffing me—now or ever! Where do you get the stuff it says on the injunction?"

"Right to Privacy?" Potter grinned. "I read it in a book. A lawbook!"

"Bah," Henri roared. "I never heard of it!"

"Lot of people haven't ever

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heard of it. Just the same . . ."

"Just the same nothing. Leave me tell you—Potter—you . . ."

"Maybe you'd better let me tell you," Mr. Potter interrupted. "You've been using Mary Foster in your picture for five weeks, Henri. You've been photographing her—not as an actress—but as a private citizen."

"What you mean?" Le Blanc screamed. "Not as an actress?"

"Actresses get paid, Henri. Miss Foster wasn't paid. Seems the law guarantees everyone an inalienable 'Right to Privacy'—the legal right not to be photographed in a picture intended to be released for financial gain—unless he or she is employed for that purpose. Inasmuch as Miss Foster is not in your employ—you are violating her 'Right to Privacy.' You ought to know that, Henri!"

There was a moment's silence. Then Le Blanc exploded. "Know it? Sure I know it. Only—only—you mean that—Paul puts a girl in his picture—who ain't even on the pay roll?" he screamed in amazement. "Listen, Potter—a seven-year-old boy would know better. Look, Potter—forget Paul—like I wish only I could. Leave us settle this thing peacefully."

Mr. Potter smiled. "Leave us," he said.

There was more talk—much more—on Mr. Le Blanc's part—and much more listening on Mr. Potter's—but Henri Le Blanc was all honey and molasses from there on—and when Mr. Potter eventually hung up, he was all smiles.

Mary and Turner, who had only heard his side of the conversation, looked at him anxiously.

"Are—are we going to get our jobs back?" Mary asked eagerly.

Mr. Potter shook his head—and their faces fell. "No," he said.

And then he grinned. "But you're going to get other ones. Good, legitimate jobs this time—with straight, seven-year contracts for both of you—and sizable salaries—and a nice twenty-thousand-dollar bonus—for me!"

Turner's eyes popped, and he whistled softly.

"Gosh," he said. "I sure wish I were a lawyer. Huh! Twenty thousand dollars—for just that little work!"

Mr. Potter was lighting a cigar—and he suddenly choked on the smoke.

But Turner wasn't finished. "What—what are you going to do with all that money, Mr. Potter?"

Mr. Potter sighed. "Buy you that house," he snapped, "in Mission Canyon!"

Mary's eyes widened—and she gasped and swallowed hard, as though she were too overcome to speak. Then she started—not for Mr. Potter—but for Turner, and threw her arms around his neck.

"Darling," she said softly—"Bob darling, you're just wonderful!"

Mr. Potter blinked, but he didn't say anything. For the first time in his life he couldn't seem to think of anything to say! ###

Continued from page 57

Famous Queens

BY
FAMOUS MASTERS

HIGHLAND QUEEN
Grand Liqueur
BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
Macdonald & Muir Ltd
DISTILLERS LEITH SCOTLAND

Bettman Archive

ANNE BOLEYN
Engraved by H. T. Ryall
from the original of Holbein

86.8 PROOF

HIGHLAND QUEEN

"The royal name in Scotch"

Blended Scotch Whisky

IMPORTED BY
McKESSON & ROBBINS, INC., NEW YORK

Smart as the Newest Fashion
and only $29.95*

An inspiration in modern design . . . a triumph of tone and performance . . . a quality radio in compact space. See the Philco 230 at your Philco dealer now.

PHILCO
Famous for Quality the World Over

*Price slightly higher Denver and West

AMERICA'S FOREMOST ROBE...
TAILORED BY Jelenko
Beach Cloth
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.
TRADE MARK OWNED & CLOTH MFD. ONLY BY GOODALL-SANFORD INC.
HAND WASHABLE

For the beach, club, travel or at home, there's nothing like these sensational robes made of "Beach Cloth" by Goodall—makers of the famous "Palm Beach" wear. They're soft and luxurious, handsome yet practical. And because they're tailored by Jelenko, you can be sure of correct fit and fashion. Light blue, pearl gray, light green, sand, copen blue, oyster and maize. $15.

A Goodall *Fabric*

TAILORED BY Jelenko
1239 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 1

GARNIER
LIQUEURS
Julius WILE SONS & CO. INC. 1877
GARNIER
P.G.
CREME DE MENTHE GLACIALE
PRODUCT OF U.S.A.
GARNIER

Cordials of quality since 1859

Specify Garnier and name your favorite flavor:

CREME DE MENTHE
CREME DE CACAO
ABRICOTINE • CHERRY
BLACKBERRY
All 60 Proof
LIQUEUR D'OR
86 Proof
or any special
liqueur you prefer . . .
Garnier makes them all.

There is a difference in cordials, as you'll discover when you taste Garnier Liqueurs. For 89 years, they have been the world's finest . . . recognized and preferred by connoisseurs! Ask for them by name.

Julius WILE SONS & CO. INC.
IMPORTERS SINCE 1877

Imported by
Julius Wile Sons & Co., Inc.
New York, N. Y.

Mr. Hooper Counts Ears

Continued from page 71

third person with casual aplomb.

"Hooper is the only person in the organization who doesn't have a job," he will tell you, and the elegant emptiness of his private office bears him out. He roams through his organization with the nervous stride of a caged cougar. His need for action sends him hurtling across the continent at any provocation.

His freedom to concentrate on the great intangibles of the profession is a recent development.

"Hooper had to do everything himself at first," he says, ". . . work out the system, set up the office, hire all the people to do the telephone calling and cover the country as his own salesman."

In 1938, the year Hooper decided to go into business for himself, Archibald M. Crossley was radio's official pulse-taker. He had been financed by advertisers and his audience-research organization was operated as a co-operative enterprise for their benefit. Hooper appeared on the scene as a Johnny-Come-Too-Lately, asking rates a third higher than Crossley charged. Furthermore, he was unknown in market research where Crossley was a recognized authority. Undaunted, Hooper opened up shop in typical tycoonish fashion.

He teed off in Los Angeles, with an invitation to all radiomen in the vicinity to attend a conference in his hotel suite at 10 a.m. the following morning.

"Hooper told them the meeting would be over by noon so that they would be able to keep any luncheon appointments they might have," he recalls, "but the real reason was to save Hooper the price of buying lunch and drinks for them all. He couldn't afford it then."

The conference was a huge success, and he repeated the pattern in San Francisco, and Chicago and then came on to New York.

Hooper made his New York debut with a loud splash by throwing a press party at Pietro's Third Avenue steak house where the steaks were thick and tender and the wine flowed freely—and for free. The brawl was such a success that Hooper has continued the practice, convoking a gathering of the clan whenever he makes an announcement.

Hooper is able to invest all his actions with excitement, an achievement in the usually dry-as-dust realm of statistics. His dramatic flair is backed up by an ability to turn his figures into legitimate news material. *Variety*, *Billboard*, *Tide* and many other entertainment and advertising trade journals run regular features based on his reports. In 1946, when Hooper had Crossley on the ropes and wanted to deliver the knockout punch in public, he took a full-page ad in all the trade papers, listing fourteen reasons

"When Acid Indigestion haunts me, I reach for my Tums!"

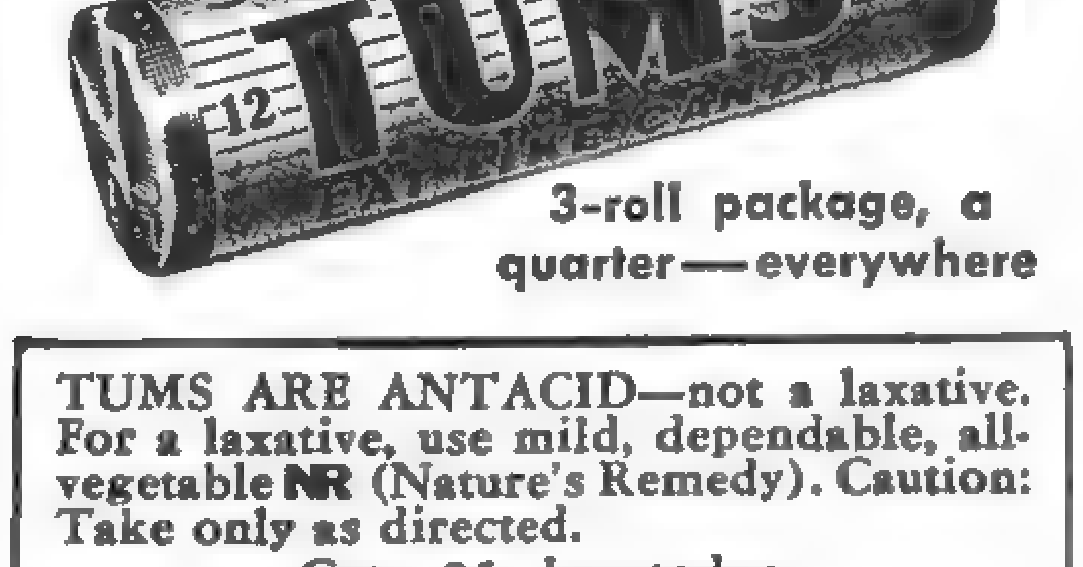
Says BORIS KARLOFF
Famous Hollywood Star of Many Movie Chillers

"I can scare movie audiences," says Boris, "but it takes Tums to put the chill on acid indigestion. So Tums are always in my pocket — ready to give me almost instant relief, on the set or off!"

● You never know when acid indigestion will strike. So for sweet relief, always carry Tums! Nothing *surer*, nothing *faster*, nothing *handier!* Easy to take as candy mints. Tums not only neutralize excess acid almost instantly—Tums also coat the stomach with protective medication, so relief is more prolonged. Tums relieve gas, heartburn and that bloated feeling. And when acid upset won't let you sleep, don't count sheep—count on Tums. No soda in Tums—no raw, harsh alkali to irritate your delicate stomach. *Never* over-alkalize—always *neutralize* excess acidity with Tums — *genuine* Tums for the tummy!

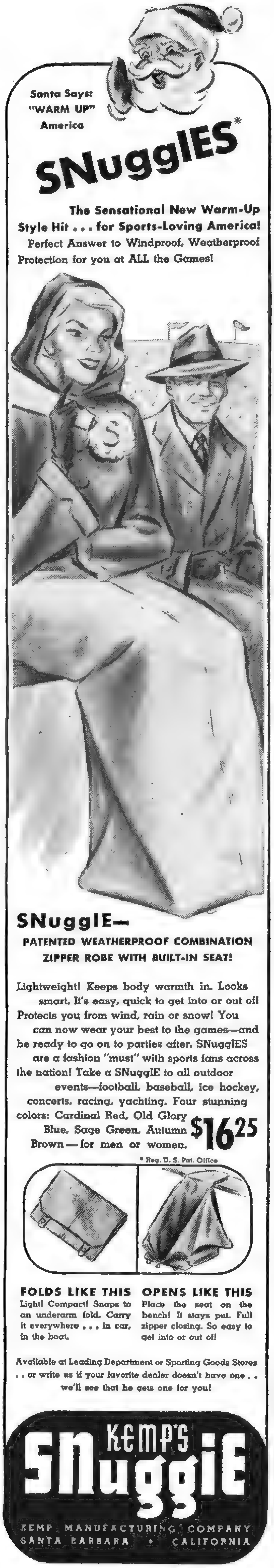
Night and day, at home or away, always carry Tums!

10¢
Handy Roll



3-roll package, a quarter—everywhere

TUMS ARE ANTACID—not a laxative. For a laxative, use mild, dependable, all-vegetable NR (Nature's Remedy). Caution: Take only as directed.
Get a 25c box today.



Santa Says: "WARM UP" America

SNugglES*

The Sensational New Warm-Up Style Hit . . . for Sports-Loving America! Perfect Answer to Windproof, Weatherproof Protection for you at ALL the Games!

SNugglE—

PATENTED WEATHERPROOF COMBINATION ZIPPER ROBE WITH BUILT-IN SEAT!

Lightweight! Keeps body warmth in. Looks smart. It's easy, quick to get into or out of! Protects you from wind, rain or snow! You can now wear your best to the games—and be ready to go on to parties after. SNugglES are a fashion "must" with sports fans across the nation! Take a SNugglE to all outdoor events—football, baseball, ice hockey, concerts, racing, yachting. Four stunning colors: Cardinal Red, Old Glory Blue, Sage Green, Autumn Brown — for men or women. $16.25

* Reg. U. S. Pat. Office

FOLDS LIKE THIS Light! Compact! Snaps to an underarm fold. Carry it everywhere . . . in car, in the boat.

OPENS LIKE THIS Place the seat on the bench! It stays put. Full zipper closing. So easy to get into or out of!

Available at Leading Department or Sporting Goods Stores . . or write us if your favorite dealer doesn't have one . . we'll see that he gets one for you!

KEMP'S SNuggiE

KEMP MANUFACTURING COMPANY
SANTA BARBARA • CALIFORNIA

why Hooperatings were superior to Crossley's.

"Crossley made the mistake of trusting the average person's memory," Hooper asserts. "His interviewers would call up and ask a person what programs he had listened to during the preceding day. In most cases, they were able to remember only the famous programs, a small percentage of the total number they had listened to during the day."

A session I spent with one of Hooper's reporters would seem to bear out his criticism of the Crossley system. Approximately a third of the people called had no idea what program they were hearing. One man said he was listening to the Baptist Church Hour. When the operator told him there was no such program on the air at the time, he took another reading and reported that he was tuned in to Fred Allen. Another person identified the Crime Doctor as Mr. District Attorney. The Hooper snooper was able to correct all these cases of mistaken identity. But under the original Crossley system, if a man said that yesterday he had heard the Baptist Church Hour and Mr. District Attorney, who was to say him nay?

Hooper was. He said it loud and often in newspapers and magazine articles, in letters to the editor, at luncheons, and through every other available medium. Sponsors and agencies, dubious of the accuracy of Crossley's ratings with their inexplicable leaps and dips in program popularity, were willing to listen.

It took Hooper three years to make a solid impression. His outfit lost money for the first two years, picked up $18,000 in its third year and kept gaining thereafter, culminating in last year's gross of $983,000. When Crossley retired from the field in September, 1946, Hooper doubled his rates for networks, who had been paying $2700 a month.

Beginning with the new year, Hooper will begin a new service. Called "U. S. Hooperatings," it will estimate the actual number of people listening in to specific network broadcasts. To accomplish this miracle, Hooper agents will tap thousands of nontelephone-owners by attaching diaries to their radio sets, in which the selected families will list the name, station and number of people listening to every program they dial. Slide-rule specialists will meld these findings with the results of the telephone calls and come up with a rating which can be projected against the total number of radio homes in the United States —some thirty-five million. The take from this and other contemplated ventures has Hooper seeing income-tax statistics in his dreams.

The story of how he worked himself into that position embraces all the clichés of the traditional self-made man.

It began in Kingsville, Ohio, where, on May 31, 1898, the future survey satrap's parents, Baptist

Continued on page 190

A TWO-WAY GIFT that keeps on giving

GLENMORE'S KENTUCKY TAVERN Straight Bourbon Whiskey BOTTLED IN BOND

Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey Bottled-in-Bond 100 Proof.

Here's a made-to-order gift for those friends who "have everything." It's a beautiful glass decanter full of famous Kentucky Tavern, "The Aristocrat of Bonds," designed to grace a private bar for years to come. It's available at your package store.

GLENMORE DISTILLERIES COMPANY, LOUISVILLE, KY.

The Gift of the Year...and the Years to come

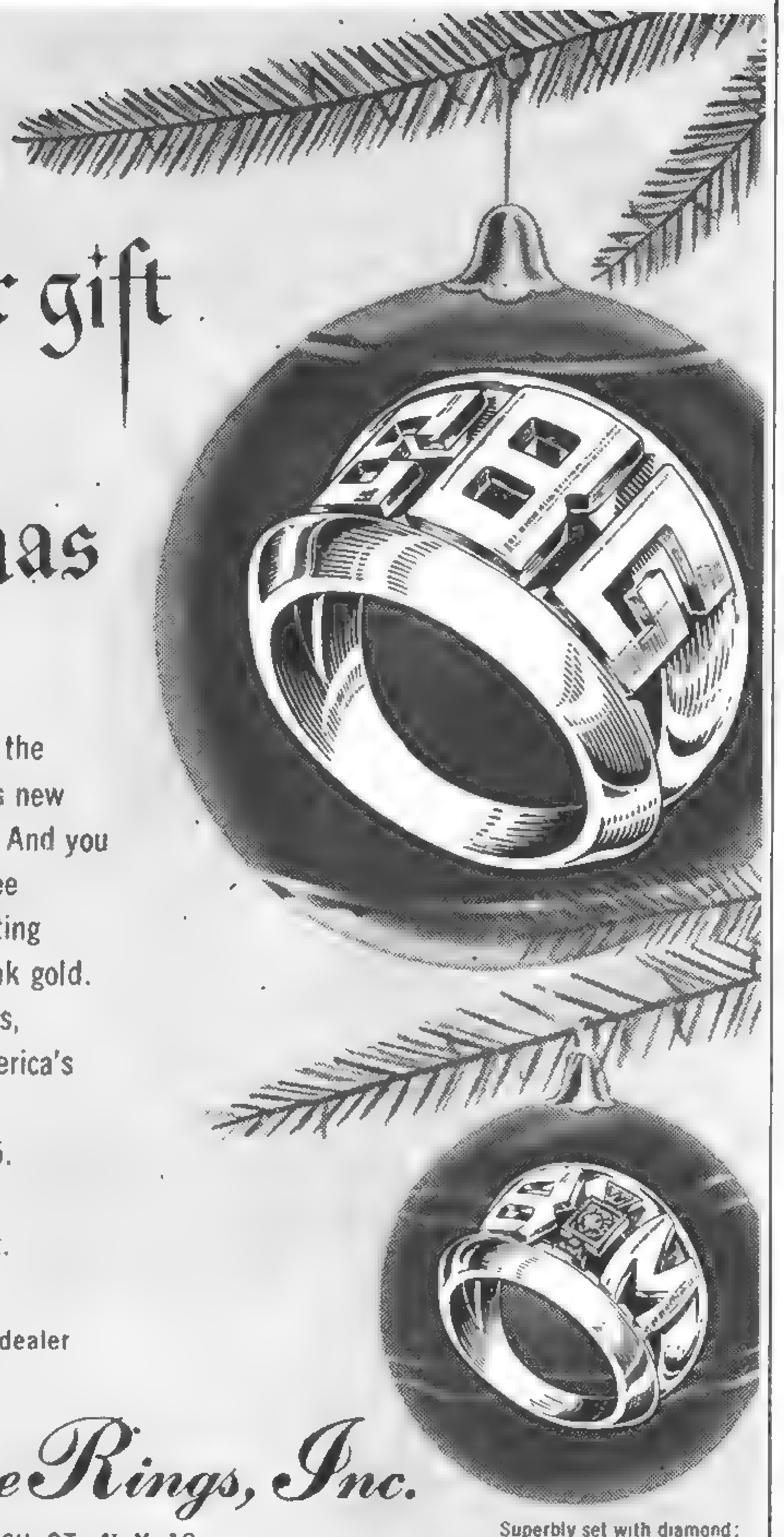
THE NEW SARD BINOCULARS

FOR TOWN . . .
Sard Theatre Binoculars 3½ x 15
Fine prismatic glasses designed for the theatre—powerful, yet feather-light and very small. Exquisite finish, with silver inlay. With fine gift case and smart leather carrying case. $180, Fed. Tax incl.

AND COUNTRY!
Sard Sportsman 6 x 20 Binoculars
Full 6-power binoculars of wide field, yet only ¼ the weight and ⅓ the size of the finest conventional types of equal field and power. Slip easily into pocket or handbag. $198, Fed. Tax incl.

These Sard glasses are the newest and finest in binoculars . . . a gift to be cherished for years to come. They are made by Square D Company's Kollsman Instrument Division, designers of precision optical instruments for aviation. See them at the optical counter of your favorite store. Or write today for informative, illustrated booklet.

SQUARE D COMPANY Kollsman Instrument Div., 80-32 45th Ave., Elmhurst, N.Y.



No finer gift this Christmas

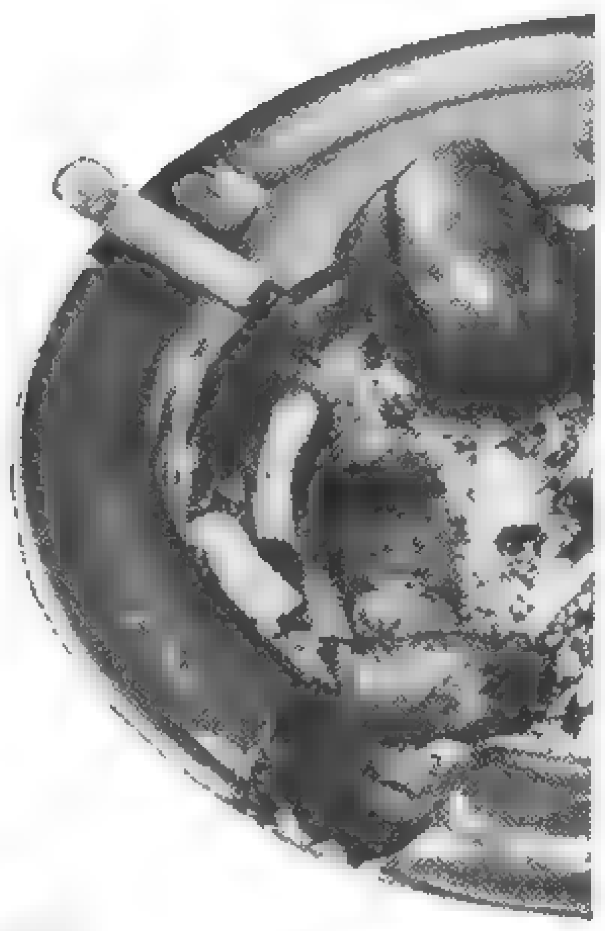
Custom made of 14k gold, the Park Lane initial ring is as new as tomorrow's newspaper. And you may select the two or three massive initials in contrasting white, yellow, green or pink gold. No finer gift this Christmas, the Park Lane is truly America's most beautiful initial ring. For women, too, about $35. Men's ring: about $49. Send for free color booklet.

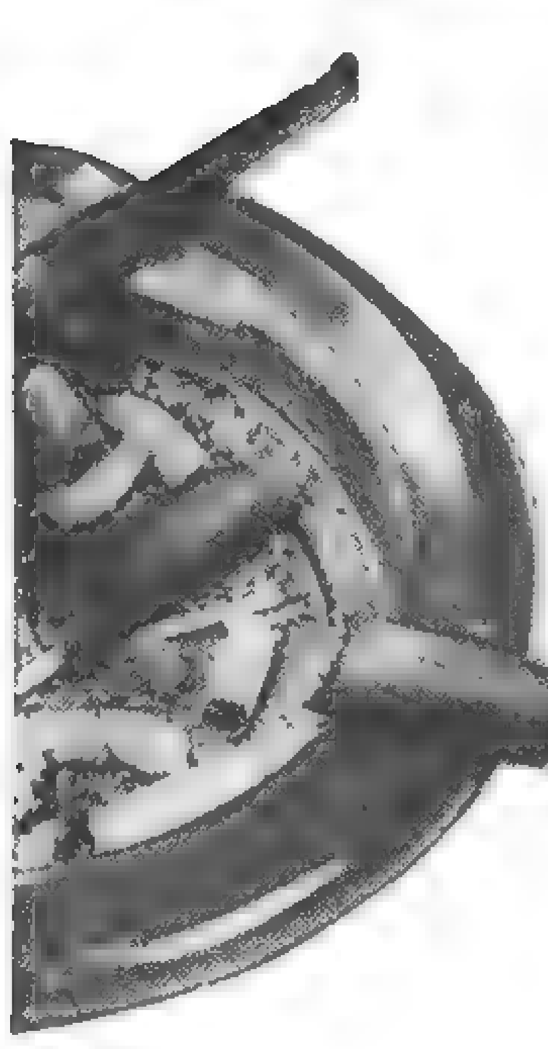
At fine jewelers everywhere, or write for name of nearest dealer

Park Lane Rings, Inc.
DIV. MANNE & SON, 74 W. 46th ST., N. Y. 19
In Canada: Swartzfeldt Bros., Toronto 2

PATENTED IN U. S. AND CANADA

Superbly set with diamond; or with insigne of fraternal order, military or naval branch. Two initials astride. Also available in other precious stones.





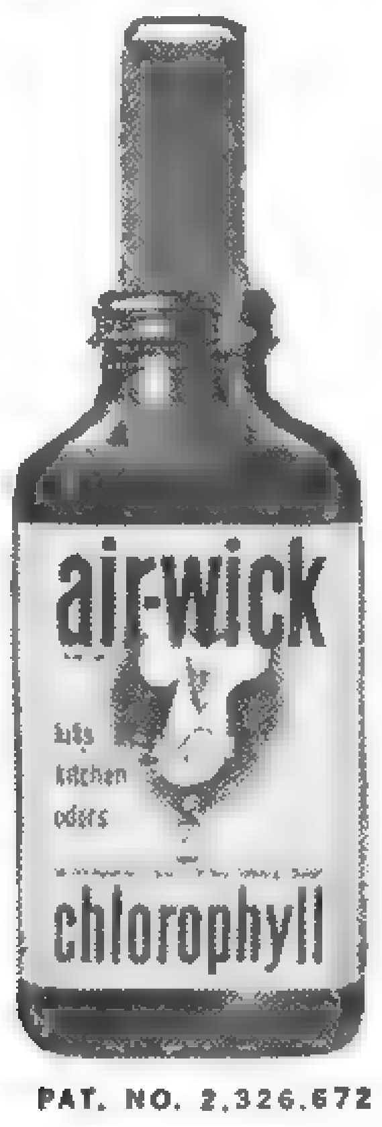
the successful host knows clean-smelling air is essential... air-wick kills all indoor odors

At cocktail party or dinner... or after-dinner tete-a-tete...air-wick* is essential for successful entertaining. It kills the odor of cooking... stale smoke...stale drinks...keeps the air in your house or apartment country-fresh. There's nothing to burn ...nothing to spray. Simply uncap the bottle and pull up the wick. Postscript: Of course air-wick is a must in any modern bathroom.

*air-wick deodorizer and household freshener is fully protected by U.S. Patent...a trademark of Seeman Brothers, Inc., New York 13, N. Y.

Tune in "Monday Morning Headlines" Sunday, coast-to-coast ABC network, 6:15-6:30 pm, EST, following Drew Pearson.

Guaranteed by Good Housekeeping



PAT. NO. 2,326,672

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Mr. Hooper Counts Ears

Continued from page 189

minister Alfred Ernest Hooper and his wife Clementina, were then living. The family moved to Chicopee, Massachusetts, and Claude graduated from the Chicopee High School as the United States was preparing to enter World War I. He enlisted in the Army and after serving a year was demobilized and entered Amherst College. He worked his way through selling aluminum products from door to door. A postgraduate session in the aluminum company's main office showed him the advantages of having a Harvard tag so he enrolled at that university's Business School.

Hooper derived two important extracurricular benefits from his year at Harvard. First, he purchased the right to take future prospective clients to business lunches at the various Harvard Clubs and, secondly, he made the acquaintance of Daniel Starch, a young instructor in the Business School, who later started him on the road to research.

That was in 1931, after Hooper had served an eight-year apprenticeship with various outfits. He began with the Liberty Savings and Loan Association of Yakima, Washington, in 1923, moved back east the following year to sell space for the *Harvard Business Review* and, later, for *Scribner's* Magazine. In 1927 he married Emily Judson Reed, daughter of his Yakima boss. They have one daughter, Mary Stuart.

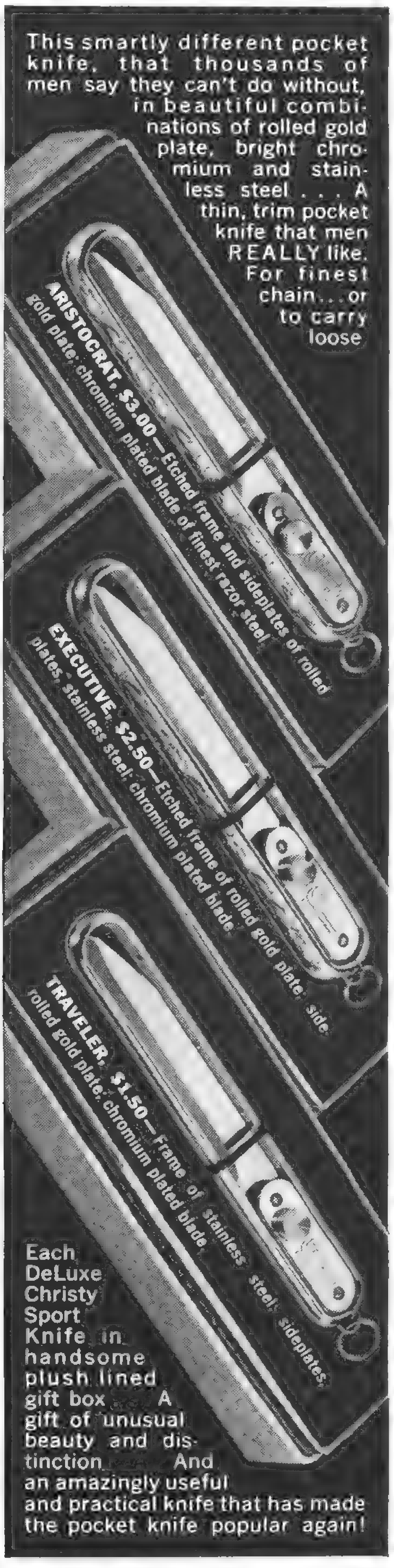
Hooper was an advertising account executive with the Wall Street house of Doremus & Company when he decided to join forces with Starch and explore the tangled terrain of market research.

"Hooper was the promoter and Starch the researcher," he says of this partnership. While promoting Starch's fact-finding and figure-flexing abilities, Hooper met another remarkable researcher, one L. M. Clark. The two left Starch, formed a market-research outfit of their own, Clark-Hooper, Inc., in which Clark got top billing and Hooper got the president's chair. In 1938 he dissolved the Clark-Hooper corporation, handing Clark the firm's newspaper and magazine accounts as his share of the split and keeping for himself only the key personnel and their few radio accounts.

In his nine-year climb to the top of the ear-counting heap, Hooper has turned up some interesting items of Americana. For one thing his reporters have proved that it takes something extraordinarily exciting, like the singing debut of a President's daughter, to shake the listening public's habits.

The broadcast of the second Bikini bomb blast was carried by all four networks but only nineteen out of a hundred families called had their sets turned on. That's

It's a Gift!
CHRISTY Sport KNIFE
DELUXE MODELS



This smartly different pocket knife, that thousands of men say they can't do without, in beautiful combinations of rolled gold plate, bright chromium and stainless steel . . . A thin, trim pocket knife that men REALLY like. For finest chain...or to carry loose

ARISTOCRAT, $3.00—Etched frame and sideplates of rolled gold plate; chromium plated blade of finest razor steel.

EXECUTIVE, $2.50—Etched frame of rolled gold plate, sideplates, stainless steel; chromium plated blade.

TRAVELER, $1.50—Frame of stainless steel, sideplates, rolled gold plate; chromium plated blade.

Each DeLuxe Christy Sport Knife in handsome plush lined gift box . . . A gift of unusual beauty and distinction . . . And an amazingly useful and practical knife that has made the pocket knife popular again!

STANDARD MODEL, $1.00—Same as above except all stainless steel with chromium plated blade of finest razor steel. In attractive gift box.

THE HANDIEST POCKET KNIFE EVER DESIGNED

Blade slides in and out of frame easily with one hand; no broken fingernails. Locks when closed or at 3 blade lengths. At men's stores, gift shops, tobacco counters, drug stores . . . or order direct.

THE CHRISTY CO.
FREMONT, OHIO

The Soft and Light
NUKNIT SWEATERS
Carry Weight with a Man

100% IMPORTED CASHMERE
Trade NUKNIT Mark
FULL FASHIONED

Only the finest, silkiest fleece of the rare Cashmere goat is spun into these warm pullovers... firmly knit... classically styled.

Give a NUKNIT Cashmere... he'll always cherish the gift and remember the giver

Sleeveless pullover—about $15.
Long-sleeved pullover—about $22.

At fine shops, or write
NUSBAUM KNITTERS, INC.
1 East 35th St. New York 16, N. Y.

As Distinctively Scotch as the Claymore

86.8 Proof
MARTIN'S
ORIGINAL
V.V.O.
BRAND
SPECIAL LIQUEUR
BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
ALL EXTRA QUALITY
SCOTLAND

Ask for
MARTIN'S
ORIGINAL V. V. O. BRAND
Blended Scotch Whisky

IMPORTED BY McKESSON & ROBBINS, INC., NEW YORK

just a few more than are usually tuned in at that time to hear the adventures of Captain Midnight, Just Plain Bill, or Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy.

The top favorites of the American people would seem to be Bob Hope and Fibber McGee who, in the period covered by sixteen reports which I checked, split the top spot evenly. Fibber's fans seem to be a bit more fanatical, if the Chicago man interviewed by a Hooperative is typical. He told the interviewer that he was listening to Fibber and Molly one Sunday evening although the McGee show is broadcast on Tuesday nights. The reporter suggested that there must be some mistake, but the head of the house insisted that his family heard the McGees every night. They transcribed the program on a home recorder every Tuesday and warmed it over each evening until the following week.

Although Hope and McGee, closely followed by other variety shows like the Fred Allen, Jack Benny and Charlie McCarthy divertissements, are consistently at the top of the Hooperade these days, none of them has been able to approach the ratings of the old Major Bowes' Amateur Hour.

Franklin D. Roosevelt used to snag the biggest audiences of all. For his "stab-in-the-back" snarl at Italy on July 10, 1940, he got a Hooper of 57. From then until our entry into the war, his ratings rose from 59 for the *Arsenal of Democracy* speech to 69.8 for the message proclaiming a national emergency, and finally to the peak of 79 for the declaration of war.

President Truman hasn't topped the Roosevelt ratings, but his daughter, Margaret, won her spurs on her debut broadcast with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. That program, which usually hovers between a 2 and a 3, spurted to an 18.6 for Margaret's appearance and bounced into the First Fifteen, radio's Valhalla. It was the first time in years a symphony program had scored so high.

The ultimate tribute to Hooper's power was rendered by Happy Felton, who emceed Pot O' Gold, one of the first give-away, audience-participation programs. The show's audience had been steadily dwindling as the quality and quantity of its competitors' prizes rose. Faced with the task of attracting an audience with only one measly $1000 prize as bait, Happy grew increasingly sad as he and his sponsors watched his Hooper decline. One evening Felton dragged his weary body up to the microphone and whispered his farewell gag. "Good night, Mr. Hooper. You win."

Hooper wishes performers wouldn't take his ratings so personally.

"Hooper has nothing against actors," he maintains. "Hooper just asks the public what it is listening to and puts the answers on record. Our responsibility ends with keeping the record straight."

It is a heavy responsibility, but Hooper says he can bear it. ##

Continued from page 71

The name of Pedro Domecq on the bottle means a joy to taste, a pleasure to serve. Whether La Ina Sherry or Fundador Brandy, it is the pride of a noble house, founded by Pedro Domecq 217 years ago, and now in its seventh generation of great tradition.
Bottled in Jerez, Spain

the Sherries and Brandies of
Pedro Domecq

SOLE U.S. AGENTS
CANADA DRY GINGER ALE, Inc.
NEW YORK N.Y.

FUNDADOR BRANDY—86 PROOF

The Ancient Art of *CELLINI FILIGREE*

Helmet of Charles IX,
King of Sweden

Revived in the
World's most beautiful pencil

A "lost art" returns to thrill the owners of the ultimate in mechanical pencils... the new Ritepoint Filigree. For Ritepoint has found a way to apply Cellini's intricate designs in precious metals by an exclusive patented process that rivals the handwork of old masters. It is a perfect gift—unmistakeably the utmost in mechanical pencils.

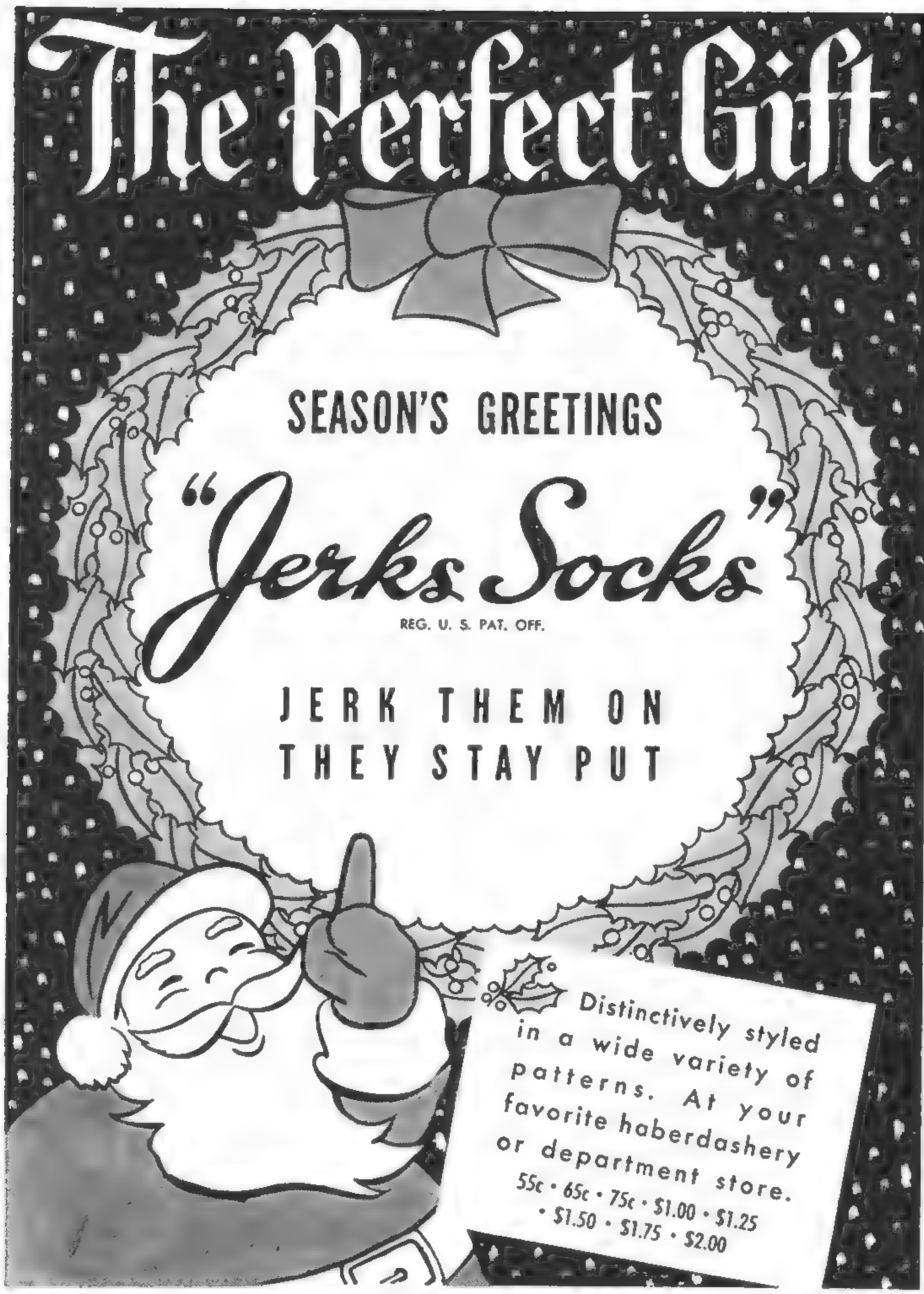
Only $5 (plus 20% Fed. Tax)... at leading stores everywhere, choice of Dubonnet, Ebony Black or Cardinal Red with Filigree in Sterling Silver or Sterling Silver with Gold overlay... for men or women... Gift packaged with a steel-engraved leaflet on the history of Cellini Filigree.

Pencil contains 36 inches of thin lead.

Ritepoint FILIGREE
PATENTED PENCIL

RITEPOINT CO.
4350 S. Kingshighway
St. Louis 9, Mo.

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MANUFACTURERS OF FINE WRITING INSTRUMENTS



The Perfect Gift

SEASON'S GREETINGS

"Jerks Socks"

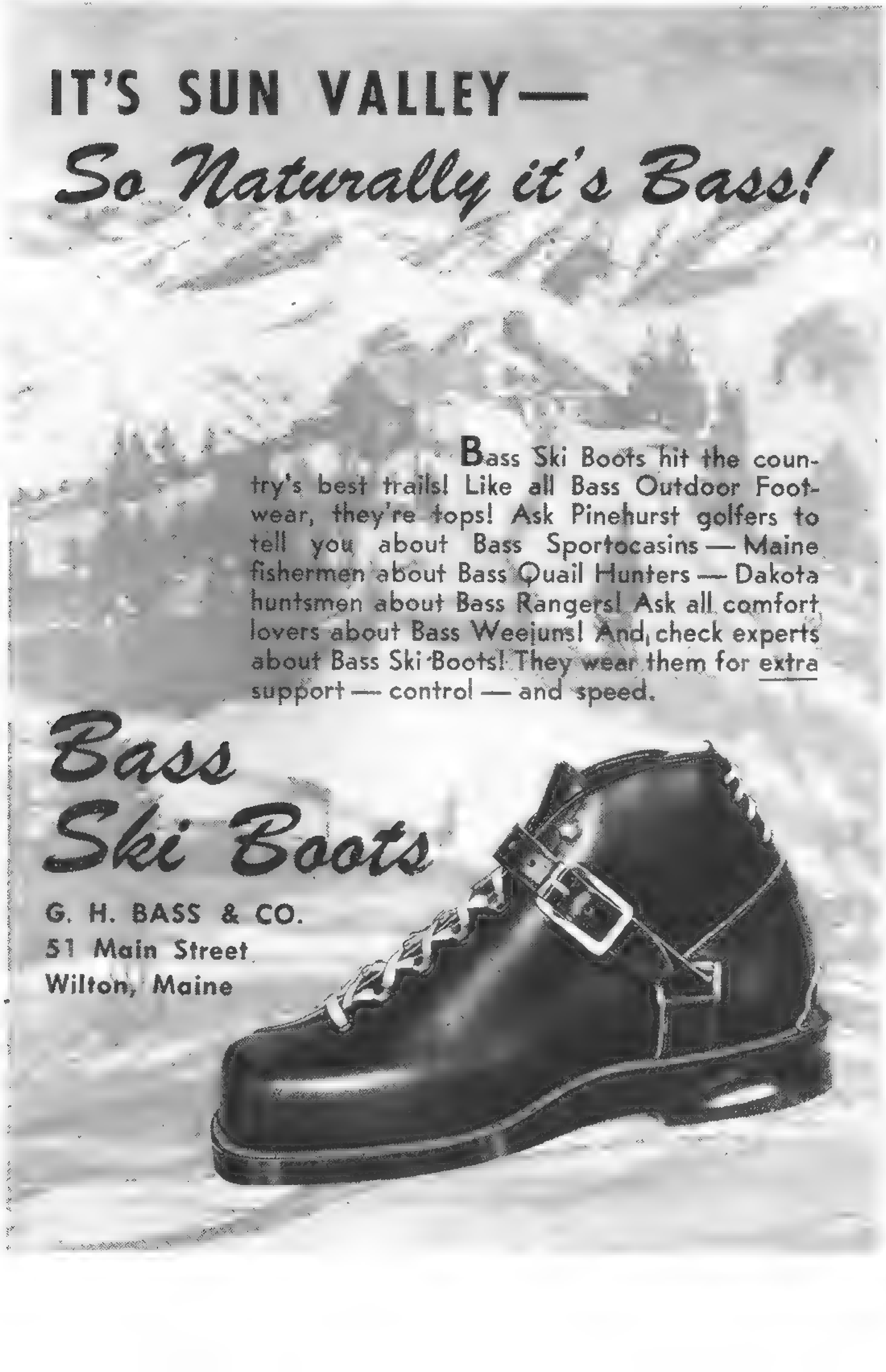
REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

JERK THEM ON
THEY STAY PUT

Distinctively styled in a wide variety of patterns. At your favorite haberdashery or department store.

55c • 65c • 75c • $1.00 • $1.25 • $1.50 • $1.75 • $2.00

JERKS SOCKS INCORPORATED • CINCINNATI, O.



IT'S SUN VALLEY—
So Naturally it's Bass!

Bass Ski Boots hit the country's best trails! Like all Bass Outdoor Footwear, they're tops! Ask Pinehurst golfers to tell you about Bass Sportocasins — Maine fishermen about Bass Quail Hunters — Dakota huntsmen about Bass Rangers! Ask all comfort lovers about Bass Weejuns! And, check experts about Bass Ski Boots! They wear them for extra support — control — and speed.

Bass Ski Boots

G. H. BASS & CO.
51 Main Street
Wilton, Maine

Midwinter Dream World

Continued from page 96

country has been ruled for twenty-five years by a prince whose line has governed since the end of the thirteenth century.

During the recent war, first the Italians, then German army officers said nuts to neutrality and walked right in. So when an American Army column was reported marching down the road after the Riviera landings, the entire Monagasque population of 24,000 turned out with flags, flowers and fruit to welcome their liberators.

Approaching the Monagasque frontier, the American commander, respecting the neutrality of Monaco, detoured his column around the country, leaving the populace with their flags drooping. In Monaco that night there was a fine appreciation of American military ethics, but a rather let-down feeling all around.

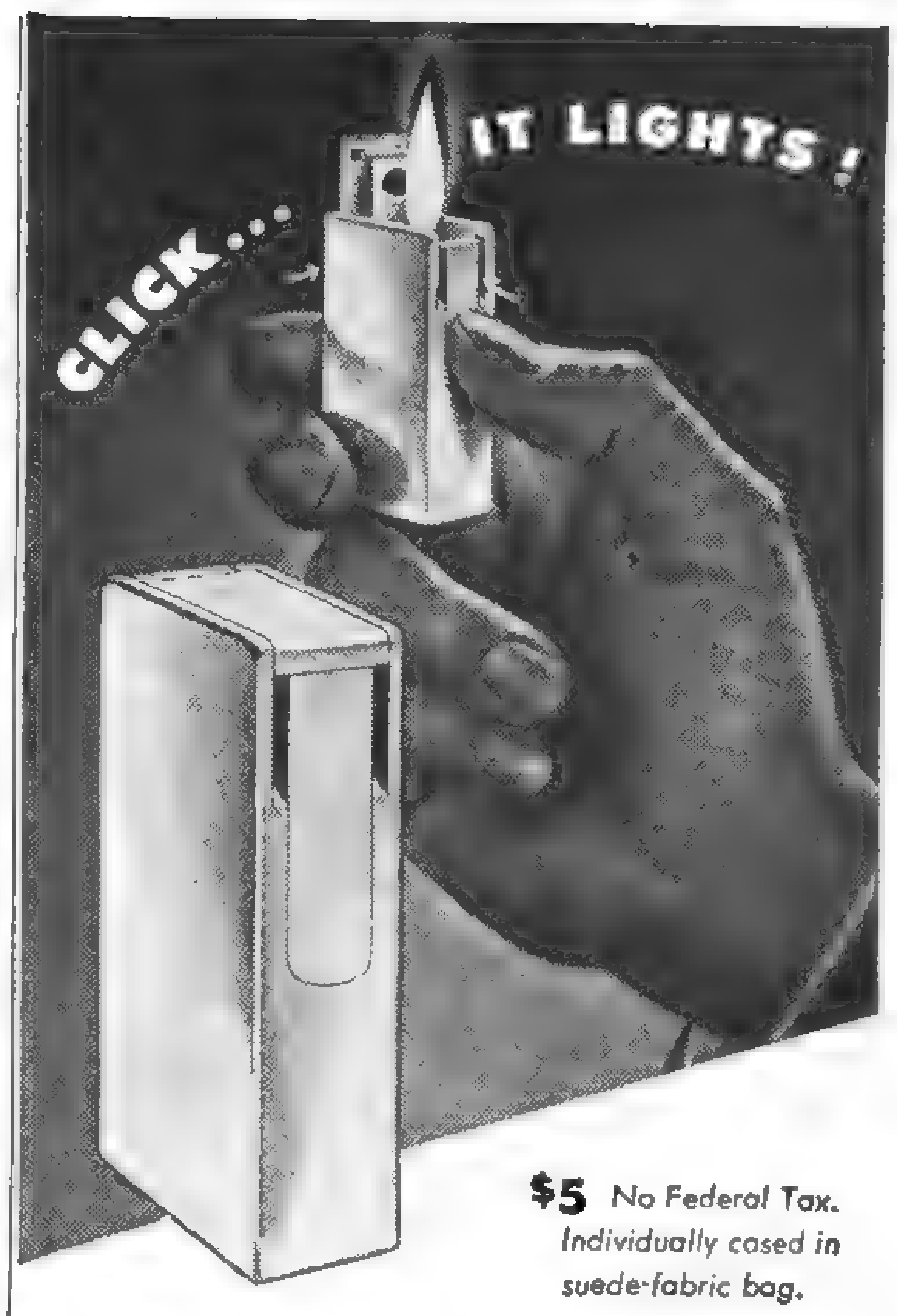
Monte Carlo is associated in the American mind with green baize gambling tables chaperoned by stony-faced croupiers with people jumping off cliffs or blowing their brains out all over the newly mowed lawn. It is one of the luxest of all the de luxe Riviera resorts, with many visitors there for the outdoor sports and all the other amenities—as well as quiet guys in business suits who haunt the roulette tables, trying to work out a system.

You'll want to spend a half day on an excursion to Grasse, twelve miles north of Cannes, where the streets all smell of flowers and the people all smell of perfume. Here is the center of the French perfume industry, and most of the population works in the scent factories. It is the core of a countryside planted with violets, tuberoses, mignonettes, jonquils, jasmine and carnations. You should visit a perfume factory to see essential oils distilled from the flowers.

If you're a winter-sports fan, you can go up into the Alps to Beuil or Valberg about fifty miles from Nice and find excellent skiing in the perpetual snows; and you can return to the coast for a dip in the Mediterranean before dinner. Or you can stay at the Grand Hotel at Valberg in a room with central heating, with hot and cold running water, for about seven to eight dollars a day with meals, tax and service included. With an altitude of about five thousand feet, the area has a snow season extending from mid-November through March, ski jumps, two lifts, a floodlit skating rink.

Twelve miles beyond Valberg is the plateau of Auron, which enjoys a snow season extending into May. Here are four Alpine runs, two beginners' slopes, a cable railway and a ski school.

Closest winter-sports area to Nice is Peira Cava, twenty-five miles away, where a number of good hotels serve as winter-sports centers while offering magnificent



$5 *No Federal Tax. Individually cased in suede-fabric bag.*

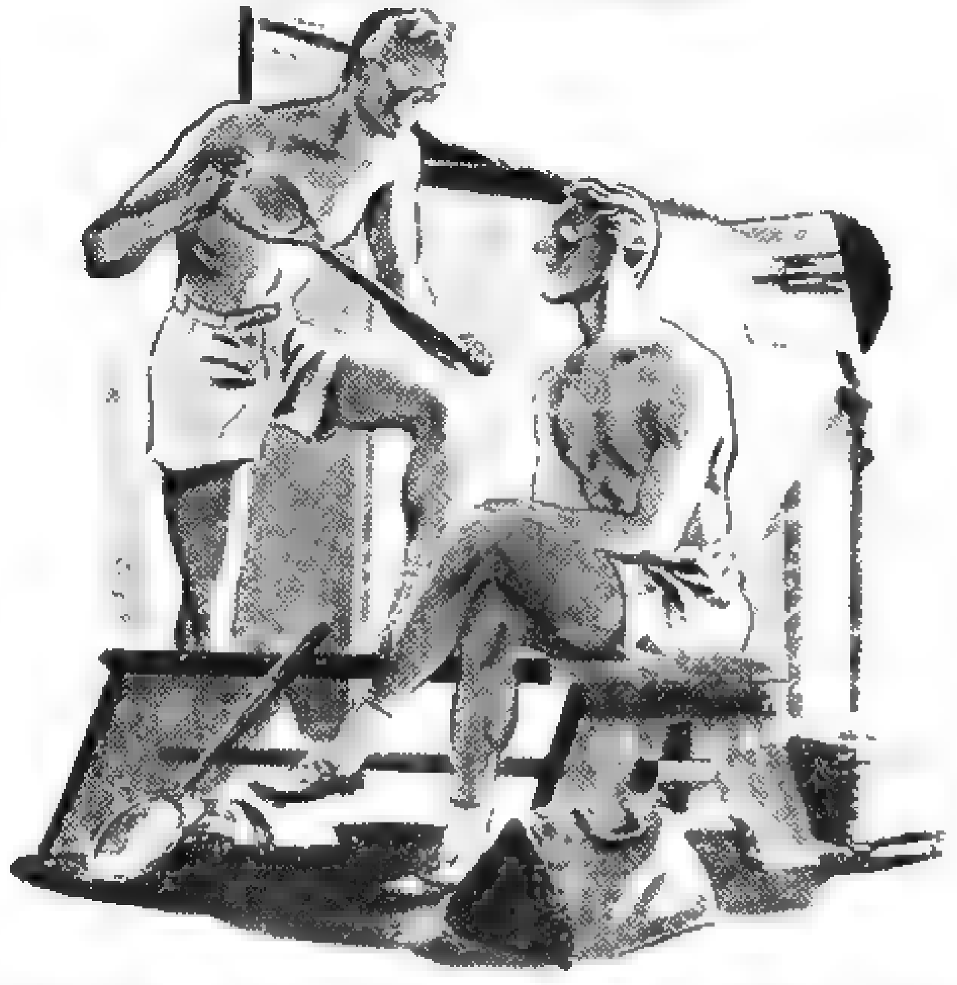
...a mere touch and the top of Lord Oxford opens *automatically*, providing an instant flame! Working with an "up-draft", like a lamp with a chimney, Lord Oxford Automatic has its own built-in wind-breaker. The wick burns within a sheltered recess, ventilated to maintain a lusty light, even in a breeze. Perfectly safe in pocket or handbag. Trouble-free and fully guaranteed.

OXFORD-PYKE, INC., 551 Fifth Ave., N.Y. 17

LORD OXFORD
Automatic
The Up-Draft Lighter

If your dealer can not supply you, order direct, but please include dealer's name

To Help Keep You Physically Fit . .
HANOVIA
ULTRAVIOLET QUARTZ HEALTH LAMP



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views of the blue Mediterranean and sun-drenched Corsica beyond.

You'll find plenty of sun sports, no matter where you stay on the Riviera. There's yachting, fishing, motorboating, tennis, golf, horseback riding all along the coast. Whether you go swimming depends on how warm you like your sea. Average winter day's temperature runs about sixty degrees, and if you like that temperature, the beach is for you. The Riviera is the home of the practically nonexistent bathing suit. This year the girls are reported to be featuring a two-piece bra and pants job made of cobwebs and kept in place by the wearer's holding her breath and sticking her chest out. The effect is fetching . . . it fetches about every male on the beach.

Night life: After dark you'll learn that metropolitan life on the Riviera centers about the casinos. At the Palais de la Méditerranée in Nice, things start picking up at teatime, which extends from about four-thirty to seven, when two orchestras play for dancing at the Candy, the casino's night club. At eight or eight-thirty you assault a beautiful meal in the main dining room. Dinner costs about five dollars, less than it would cost in comparable surroundings outside—the difference being made up by the profits from the gaming tables. The victim is, in other words, fattened up more or less on the house before being led to the slaughter.

Pushing yourself away from the table, you waddle off into the game rooms. There you pick your poison—roulette, boule, baccarat, or trente-quarante. Chips are worth five, twenty, one hundred, one thousand, five thousand, ten thousand, fifty thousand and one hundred thousand francs. Gambling goes on to five or six a.m., but if all this bores you, you can go to the casino's theatre and see a comedy played by a stock company which spends Thursday to Sunday nights in Nice and the rest of the week in Monte Carlo.

After you've left the casino in Nice, if you still want one more round, try Le Chat Noir in the Cours Saleya in the market place. Market people and chauffeurs eat on the ground floor, but in the basement there is a night club which runs from midnight until eight in the morning. Entertainment consists of a one-piece orchestra—a drummer accompanying phonograph records—and unescorted girls who drop in after the casinos have closed.

Where to eat and drink: The Niceoise cuisine is a mélange of French, Provençal and Italian, which is to say that it is wonderful. One of the best places you'll ever eat in is Da Bouttau, in the Old City at 2 Place Halle-aux-Herbes. Here you'll find the red-checked tablecloths, the wonderful cooking for which French restaurants have been famous. Jean Bouttau owns the place, and makes out your check by drawing pictures of what you've had. His brother Maurice does the cooking, and the rest of the family pitches

Continued on page 194

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Midwinter Dream World

Continued from page 193

in to serve. The whole place, including the kitchen, is one big room. Sausages hang from the ceiling. Try the rockfish soup, the fish in tomato sauce and olives, the fried pepper steak, or the octopus in tomato sauce. Also take a slug of branda, which is practically alcohol distilled from grape residue after the wine has been pressed out. It's like nothing else in this world.

You'll probably want to visit the Cintra Vogade in Nice. It's a centrally situated bar and restaurant where you can get fine food and liquor at prices that aren't too steep. It was the G.I.'s favorite hangout, and the American atmosphere lingers on.

While you're in Monte Carlo, drop in at Oscar's, 11 Ave. de Grande Bretagne, for curried chicken and crêpes Suzette. Oscar is a nostalgic sort of gent who writes music and sounds rather like Richard Tauber while singing Viennese songs in French, German, Italian and English.

Best restaurants in Cannes include the Café de Paris, Robert's, L'Amour, Palace, La Marjolaine, and Le Drap d'Or. Meals out will run you about $5.75 or $6.75 with ordinary wine, so you may prefer to dine at your hotel.

What to wear: With an air-line luggage allowance of only 66 pounds, you've got a clothes problem, especially since the Continent is now beginning to dress up again and you'll need a dinner jacket for the galas and your evenings at the casino. Here's the way we'd solve the problem: Travel in a medium-weight plain grey flannel suit; the trousers can double as slacks with an odd jacket. Pack one pair of lightweight slacks and two sports jackets—one medium, the other lightweight. Wear brown wing-tip shoes, pack a pair of brown-and-whites or brown moccasins. Add your dinner jacket, shoes and accessories, ski pants and parka if you're heading for the hills, beach robe, swim trunks, clogs, shirts, ties, underwear, sox—and you're close to the weight limit.

The soft, crusher-type felt hat is perfect for traveling and for the Riviera, and so what if it does look somewhat out of season to and from La Guardia Field? You'll be wearing your overcoat and carrying your camera, so the airline people should give you a break and not weigh them in. If you've got an imported camera, be sure to register it at customs before you leave.

What to buy: France has always been famous for luxury goods, perfume, jewelry, silk and other textiles, though what you may find on your shopping expeditions depends on the state of the fluctuating French economy.

Best buy on the Riviera is the perfume you can get at the factories in Grasse. While we were

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there they were selling some of the finest perfumes in aluminum flagons for about three to five dollars, a fraction of what you'd pay in the U. S. If your wives and girl friends are sticklers for names and fancy bottles, though, better buy your perfumes at the regular shops on the Riviera.

Where to stay: You can, if you want to, stop in a small pension for as little as four dollars a day, meals and all. But somehow we can't quite see a man paying almost seven hundred dollars in fares and then staying at a little pension. So let's confine ourselves to de luxe and first-class hotels. In Nice you have the Negresco, Roule, Royal, Plaza, Angleterre, Albert Ler, Westminster, Massena and Queens.

Among the leading hotels in Cannes are the Californie, Carlton, Majestic, Martinez and Grand. In Monte Carlo there are the Paris, Métropole, Hermitage, Grand, Palace, Mirabeau, Massena, Renaissance and the Villas Métropole.

Tipping: Hotels add about 15% to your bill which covers all usual services, including waiters, maids, bellboys, clerks, concierges and doormen—unless you demand something special, like hot and cold running blondes in your room. In restaurants, tip twelve to fifteen per cent of the tab, unless the service is already added. In all other cases figure the franc as worth a cent—for tipping purposes—and tip as you would at home—twenty-five francs when you would tip a quarter, one hundred francs for a dollar tip, etc. Cigarettes were still scarce while we were there, and you could offer someone a cigarette or two for helping you, when a tip might have been embarrassing.

How to get there: At the time of writing, Air France was planning nonstop sleeper service, New York to Paris, in new Constellations. The extra fare, in addition to the regular $345 rate, will be $125 which, to us, seems expensive for a night's sleep. The regular Air France trip is good enough for us, with stops at Newfoundland and Ireland, and a fine five-course dinner with a bottle of Bordeaux wine, breakfast, lunch, apéritifs, cocktails and champagne along the way.

Trans World Airline is running fourteen Constellation flights weekly to Paris. Route, fares and service are just about the same as Air France, and choice depends largely on which has space available. Accommodations shouldn't be difficult this winter, though, with all the new planes coming into operation. Both services connect with Air France DC-3s that fly you down to Nice.

Of course, ships of the Cunard, Holland-America, United States, French and Italian lines are offering excellent service to Europe these days, but ships are out of the picture for a two-week's visit abroad. We've got the air lines to thank for making that dream of a postwar vacation come true. ⧺

Continued from page 96

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(SEAL) Helen W. Harrington. (My commission expires May 25, 1948.)

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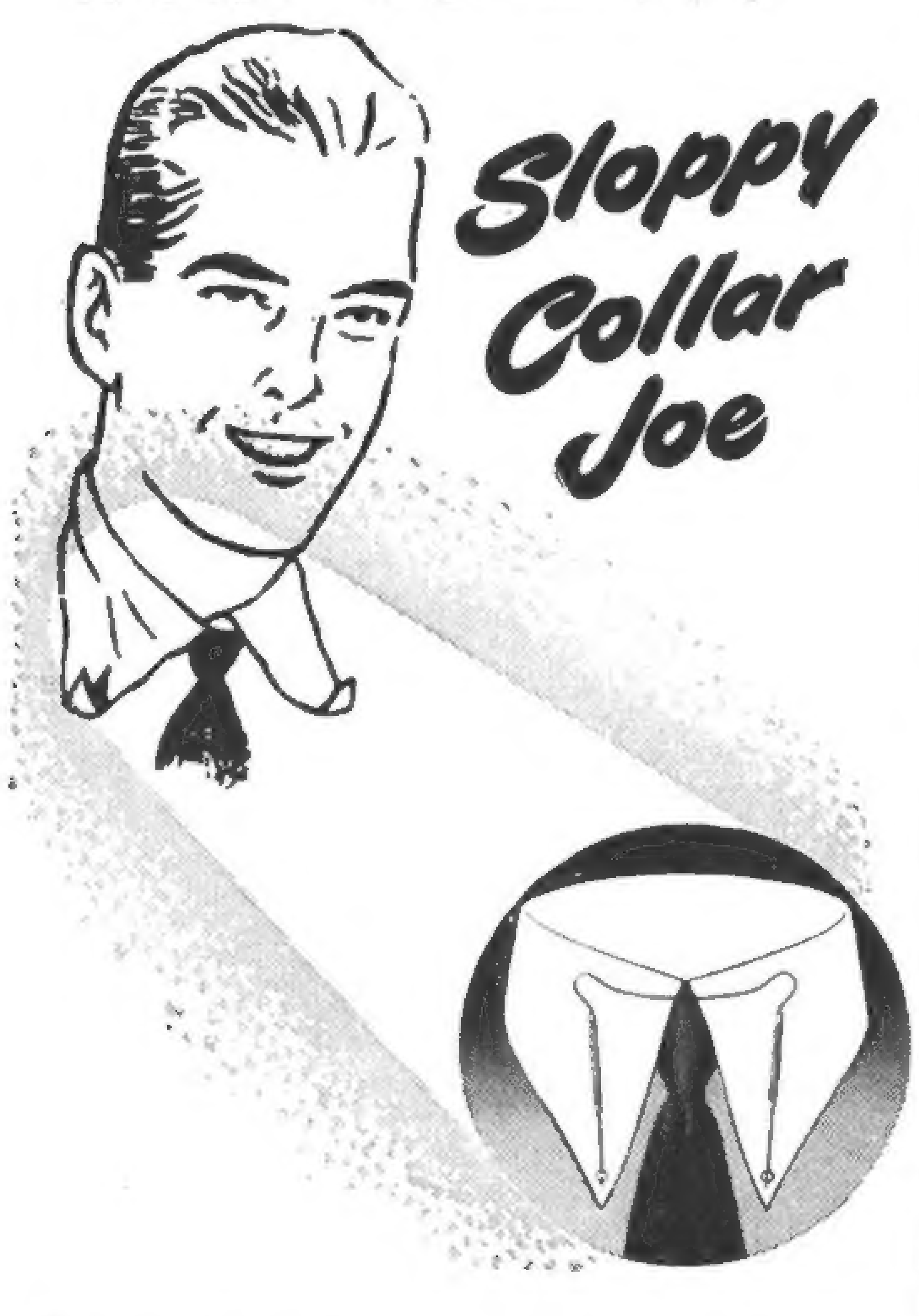

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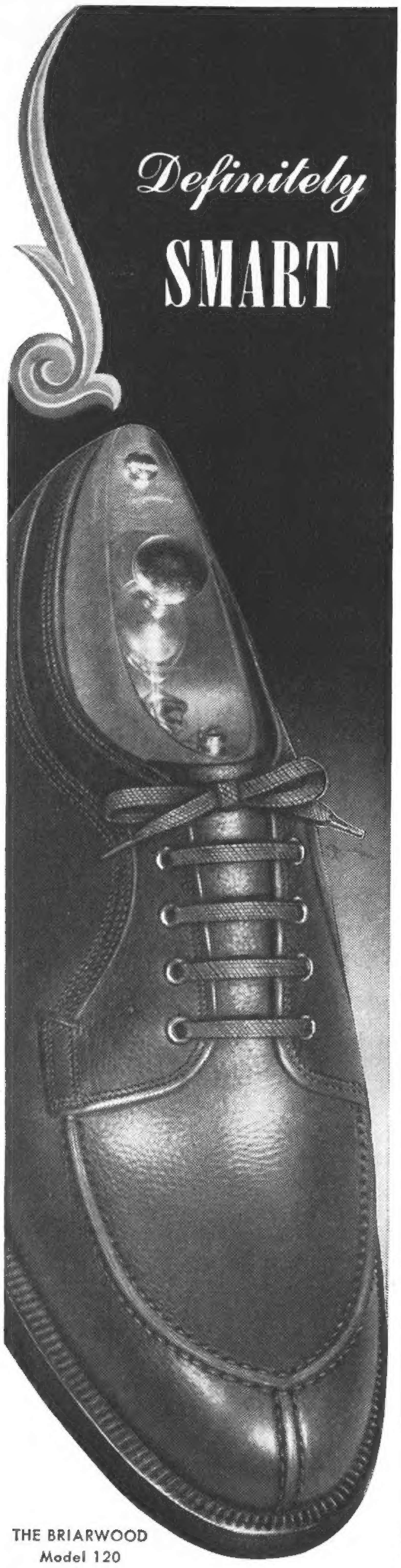

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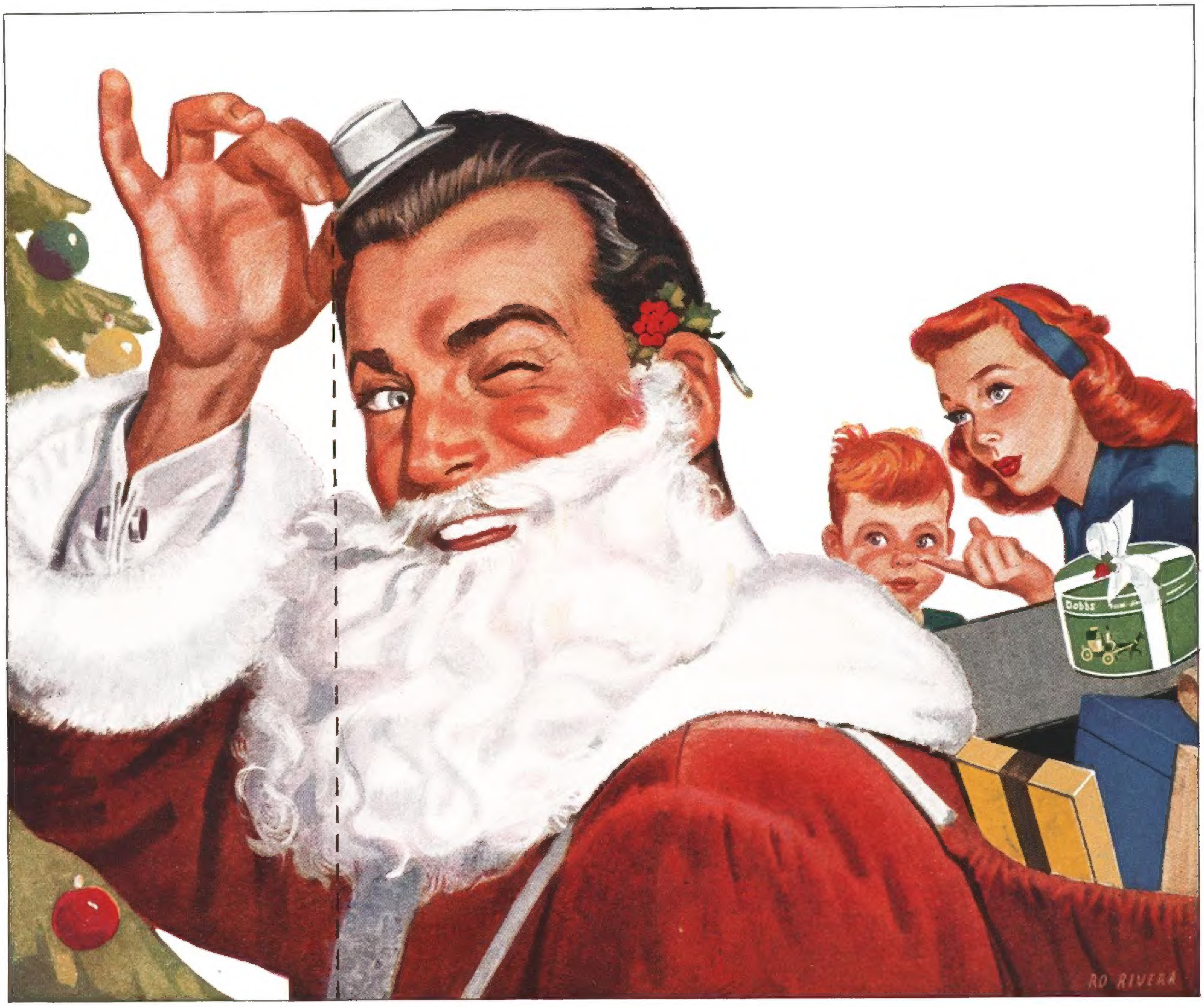
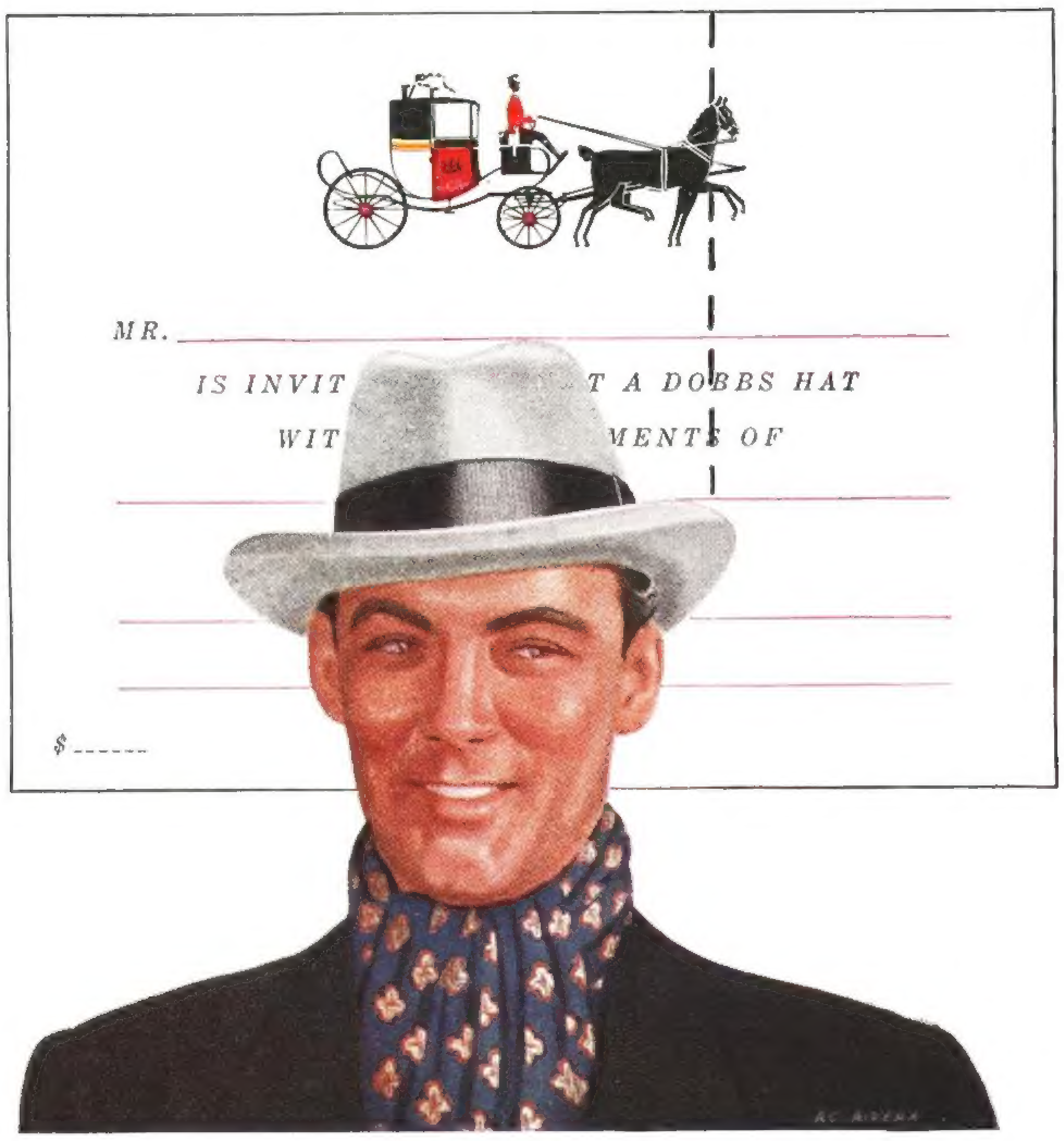


Put all your *Gift Problems* in this hat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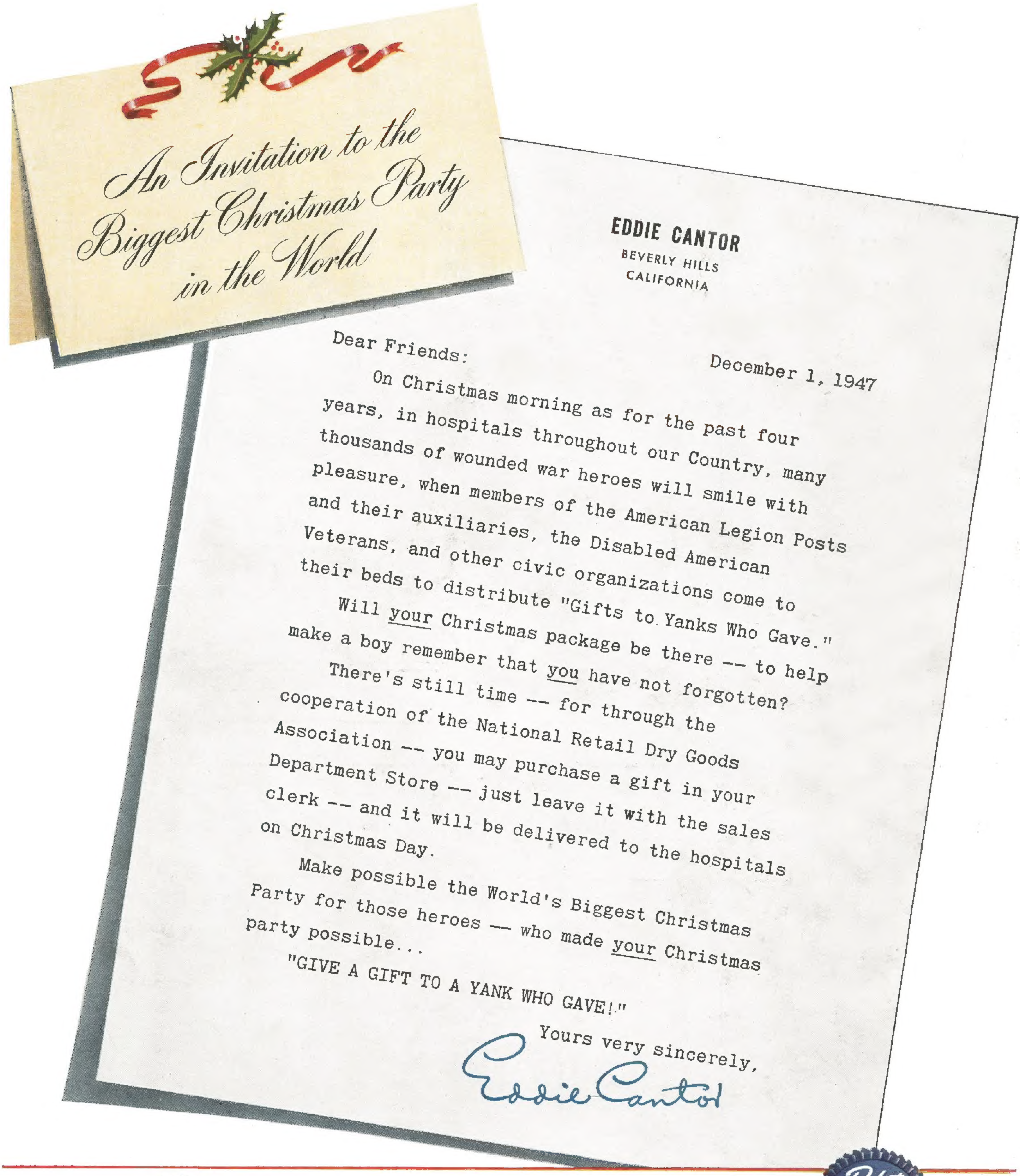

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Dear Friends:

December 1, 1947

On Christmas morning as for the past four years, in hospitals throughout our Country, many thousands of wounded war heroes will smile with pleasure, when members of the American Legion Posts and their auxiliaries, the Disabled American Veterans, and other civic organizations come to their beds to distribute "Gifts to Yanks Who Gave."

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"GIVE A GIFT TO A YANK WHO GAVE!"

Yours very sincerely,

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THE makers of Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer are proud to give their support to Eddie Cantor, the American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the National Retail Dry Goods Association and other civic organizations in this very worthy cause. Let's all "give a gift to a Yank who gave!"

Copr. 1947, Pabst Brewing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin